Ganderbill Holler • A Looming Water Shortage? • Fish Farming

NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

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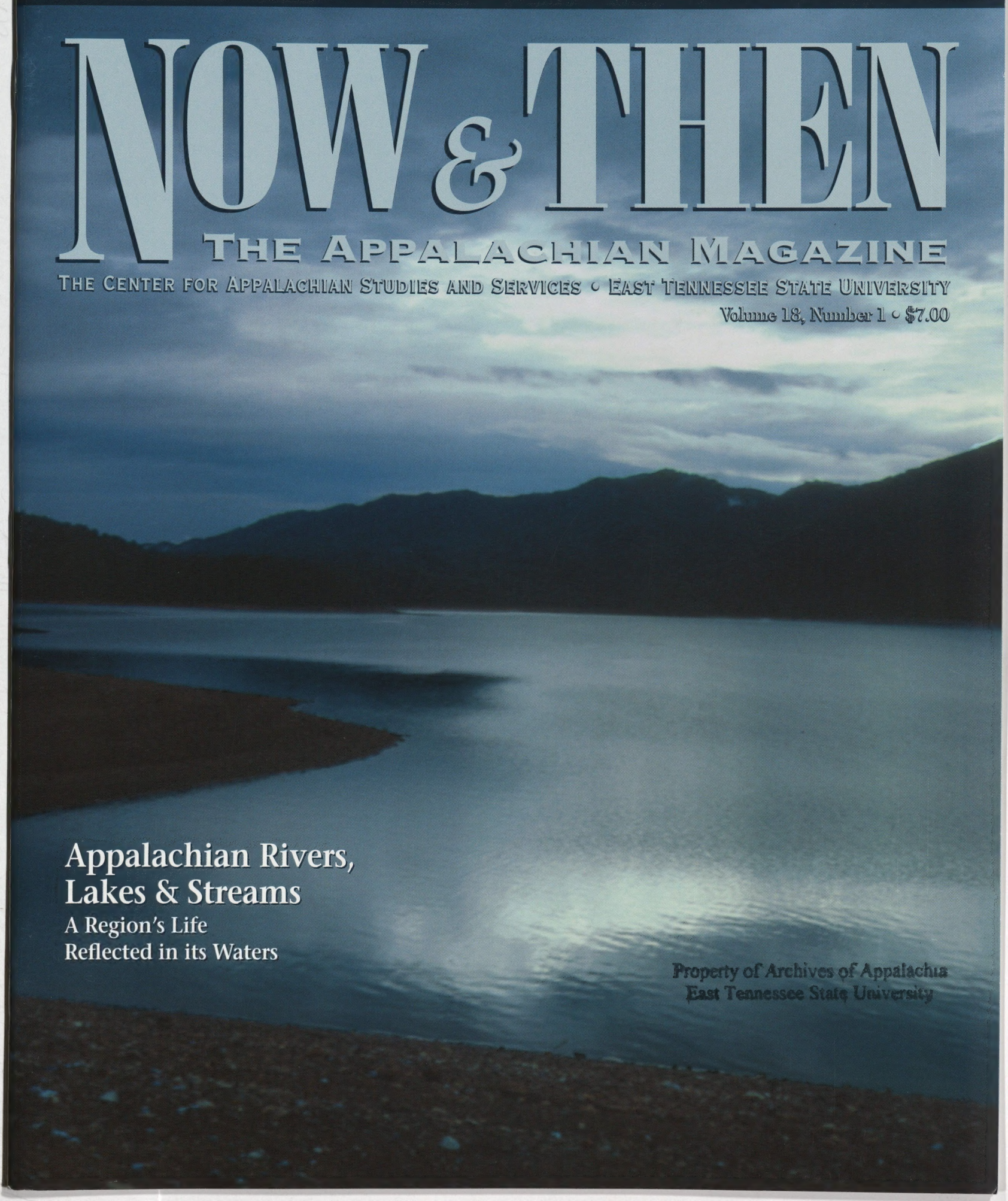

Appalachian Rivers, Lakes & Streams

A Region's Life
Reflected in its Waters

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East Tennessee State University

Fred Behrend

Reflections

Because the lake gathers the morning
wandering behind its own shadow
there is no need to mention reflections.

Whisper instead of blue feathers
floating from rim to brimming rim of eyes,
between lips of water and sky.

She: clearly standing, clearly able to bend.
He: tracing the bend he dreams she dreams.
Between them, opal sand shifting.

Do not shout of distant shores in this cove
of nesting fowl, but calmly, with each step
say softly, "shallow," and be happy

there are pools refusing to be tied
to moon's or season's whimsy.
Refuse to wander farther than the surface

where lake and dawn mingle
until the shadow of morning melts
into a blank mirror.

—Lisa Shaw Black

Lisa Shaw Black lives in Kingston, Tenn., with her husband and children. She has been the featured poet in the Gallery of Compuserve's Writer's Forum and has a poem forthcoming in Many Mountains Moving. *Her poem, "From This Desk," appeared in the spring 1999 Architecture in Appalachia issue of* Now & Then.

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NOW & THEN
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"Thousands have lived without love, not one without water."
— W.H. Auden

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Getting Down to Basics

As I was working on this issue, there were moments I caught a glimpse of my 20-year-old self. I was walking through the dark streets of my college town in Appalachian Pennsylvania down to the Susquehanna River's West Branch. It's the only time in my life I've had a river as a next-door neighbor. Sitting cross-legged on the bank or leaning over the rail of an old bridge, now replaced by a sturdier though less endearing structure, I'd watch the broad, smooth waters sweep slowly, gracefully past.

From the main part of campus on the top of a hill, we could look out and see Buffalo Mountain, some 12 miles away. The mountain would invite us to lift our eyes and our thoughts up from our immediate circumstances, to take the long view and fix our gaze on the low ridge that defined the horizon. That mountain looked so solid and immutable, so absolutely permanent.

The river nourished us in a slightly different way. Peer long enough into its waters—always in motion and always changing—and your mind shuts down. You go into a mild, pleasant trance; for a brief time, it feels as if you could slip not only the particulars of your daily life but your very self into the flow of those dark green waters. Rivers can be mystical places.

Of course, as poet Cy Dillon points out in "Goshen Pass" (p. 38), water can be "anything but metaphysical." Without the waters of our creeks, rivers, and lakes, there would be no life—and you can't get much more basic, concrete, and powerful than that.

In "Going Thirsty" (p. 3), political scientist David Feldman details how the streams coming down from Appalachia's mountains and plateaus are becoming yet another in a long list of the region's natural resources coveted by communities both within and outside its borders. These towns, cities, and states are seeking enough clean, plentiful water to support the growing demands of their populations and to sustain economic growth. They need those waters to dye and print carpets in Dalton, Ga., and to fill fish tanks in Alabama and West Virginia high school aquaculture labs where students are learning science, math, and marketable skills ("Learning Happens," p. 18).

And so we turn our rivers into transportation arteries and we dam them, divert their waters, and wrangle among ourselves about who has the right to exactly how much. Sometimes we even do a fair imitation of walking on water, as Kelley Rae's difficult but charismatic father did when he water-skied so agilely in his double-breasted suit on the South Branch of the Potomac ("Blue Beach," p. 25).

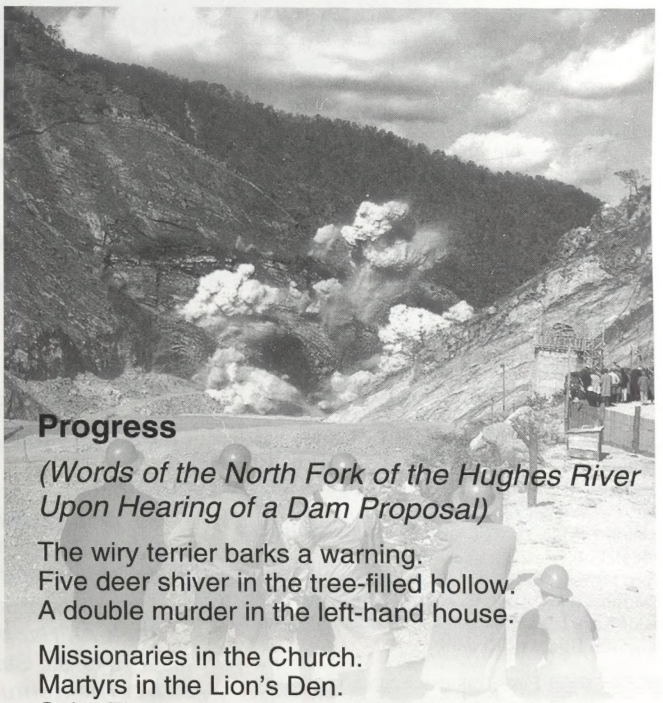
But to think we've harnessed and mastered this natural force is foolhardy. There are times when only "the hand of a real God," in Dillon's words, can protect us from the river's destructive power and rage. Rain-swollen rivers can back us into corners, leaving us to watch as freezing-cold rising waters swirl around our feet, the unenviable position that the mother and young son find themselves in Tamara Baxter's story, "A Flood of Mighty Waters" (p. 35). Our rivers and streams can give life and then, with little warning, turn on us.

The mountain stream that ran close to Inez Fugate Liftig's Eastern Kentucky home had an important lesson to teach her. As she traced the drainage chain from Ganderbill Holler to the Gulf of Mexico, she marveled at the distance the waters of the little creek that was her playground and classroom traveled. "It somehow made Ganderbill seem even more important and part of a larger plan," she writes in "Lessons from Ganderbill Holler" (p. 13).

It's hard to sit by a river for very long without feeling connected to life's length and breadth. Maybe that's really what the Susquehanna was whispering to me all those decades ago.

—Jane Harris Woodside, editor

Letters to the editor should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to: Editor, Now & Then, *ETSU, Box 70556, Johnson City TN 37614 or e-mail woodsidj@etsu.edu. Letters may be edited for length and clarity before publication.*



Archives of Appalachia, ETSU

Progress

(Words of the North Fork of the Hughes River Upon Hearing of a Dam Proposal)

The wiry terrier barks a warning.
Five deer shiver in the tree-filled hollow.
A double murder in the left-hand house.

Missionaries in the Church.
Martyrs in the Lion's Den.
Saint Fiacre blesses Irish gardens.
Saint Francis favors tiny birds.

The road to the graves fills with water.
Tombstones sink to the bottom of the lake.
Tom Oakley's dog snarls at strangers.

—Mary Lucille DeBerry

Mary Lucille DeBerry is a West Virginia Public Television producer based at WNPB-TV in Morgantown, W.Va. She has written nonfiction as well as a poetic sidebar for Goldenseal. *Her poems have appeared in* Grab-a-Nickel, Appalachian Heritage, *and* Appalachian Journal.

Going Thirsty?

Appalachia Faces Water Supply Problems

By David Lewis Feldman

Droughts and development threaten Southern Appalachia's water supply.

During a floor debate last spring on Tennessee's Interbasin Water Transfer Act in the General Assembly, House Majority Leader Jere Hargrove asserted, "This is absolutely as important an act as anything we've done in a long time. If we ever have a shortage of water, those gas lines of the 1970s will look like a tea party."

Spurred in part by the fear that Tennessee's neighbors might seek to withdraw large amounts of water from the Cumberland, Tennessee, and other rivers that flow through the state, the bill's authors designed the act so that it gives Tennessee the power to regulate the diversion of water from one river basin to another. For example, since 1997 a water utility in Chattanooga, Tenn., has been piping Tennessee River water to Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga., a growing city just across the state line that had long sought a practical, affordable water source. This diversion has spurred concern that Atlanta, and other large, distant communities might come to view Tennessee as an answer to their water needs.

Appalachia is probably one of the last places that comes to mind when people think about water shortages, disputes over water rights, or restricting water used for washing cars, irrigating crops, or watering lawns. After all, depending upon where you live in Appalachia, precipitation—rain, sleet, snow, and ice—averages anywhere from 36 to 70 inches annually. However, people living in Guntersville, Ala., or in Dalton, Ga., in Crossville and Pikeville, Tenn., or in Owingsville, Ky., know all about political conflicts over water. Those conflicts are fueled by fears that there may not be enough to support future growth. These and other communities throughout Southern Appalachia have begun to experience serious water supply disputes, only made worse by a series of droughts plaguing the area since the mid-1980s.

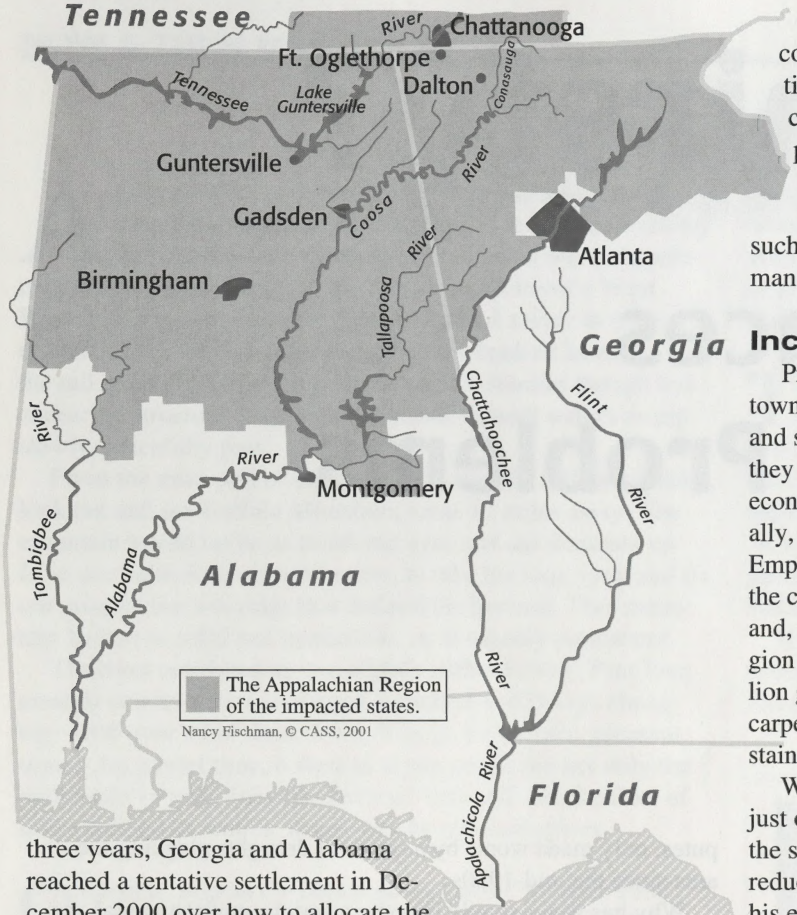
Why has water supply become a serious environmental, economic, and community development problem in Appalachia? Are disputes over water confined to a few isolated communities, or do they threaten the region as a whole? And are we doing enough to address these problems, or is more effort needed?

Water Wars

Since 1990, Georgia has been embroiled in a conflict with Alabama and Florida over how to divide the waters of the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint rivers among the three states. In a separate dispute that has been going on for almost

U.S. Department of Energy

In the early 1970s, shortages of gasoline caused drivers to line up for hours to fill up their tanks. Tennessee legislator Jere Hargrove predicts that a water shortage in Southern Appalachia would have a far greater impact.



three years, Georgia and Alabama reached a tentative settlement in December 2000 over how to allocate the flow of the Alabama, Coosa, and Tallapoosa rivers. That settlement, however, is contingent on federal agency approval and public acquiescence.

Guntersville, Ala., is one of several Appalachian communities who are looking on with concern as Georgia, Florida, and Alabama conduct what has come to be known as the "tri-state water wars." The small Marshall County town knows that the sprawling, ever-growing metropolitan Atlanta area needs more and more water. Guntersville is fearful that Atlanta might look to divert water from the Tennessee River to make up for whatever limits a negotiated agreement reached by these three states imposes on the Georgia capital.

Reducing the amount of water that reaches Guntersville would have far-reaching repercussions. With a 1990 population of just over 7,000, the town is located in the foothills of the Appalachians in Northeast Alabama on the shores of the state's largest man-made lake, Lake Guntersville. The lake was formed in 1939 when the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) completed the Guntersville Dam, located about seven miles northwest of the town. The creation of the lake made the town the southernmost port of the Tennessee River navigation system and turned the area into one of the most popular tourist destinations in the valley, drawing visitors to fish, swim, boat, water-ski — and spend their money. Marshall County tourist expenditures reached almost $71 million in 1999, a 4.9 percent increase over 1998.

Because Guntersville and its neighbors would be downstream from any potential diversion, redirecting Tennessee River waters toward the Atlanta area would affect the Alabama communities along the 950-mile shoreline of Lake Guntersville both economically and environmentally. It would curb these communities' ability to use the river for their own navigational and recreational needs. Moreover, diversion affects local water quality. A principal means of managing water pollution is "dilution," or ensuring adequate river flow. Reduced flow can threaten water quality by concentrating the toxicity, thereby increasing the risk that contaminants — such as pesticide runoff — affect fish, other aquatic life, and human health.

Increasing Demand, Diminishing Supply

Pressures on water supplies don't only originate beyond the town limits. For example, the people of the city of Dalton, Ga., and surrounding Whitfield County are anxiously wondering where they will find the new supplies of water needed to fuel their economy. The population is growing at about 1.4 percent annually, higher than the national average of slightly over 1 percent. Employment is increasing at roughly the same rate. This area is the center for North Georgia's almost $10 billion carpet industry and, after Atlanta and Savannah, the third-highest water-using region in the state. The Dalton area utilizes approximately 45 million gallons per weekday, due mainly to the requirements of the carpet industry. Dyeing and printing, as well as the application of stain-resistent coatings, are all very water-intensive processes.

While the state's rapidly growing population, expanding by just over 2 percent annually, has increased demand for water, the severe drought conditions of the past couple of years have reduced the supply. Gov. Roy Barnes has stated that because, in his estimation, there is enough water to handle all of Georgia's growth needs for the next 20 to 40 years, the state has no plans to import water from Tennessee. Still, until the tri-state water disputes are finally resolved, it will be difficult for North Georgia — and the state as a whole — to get a clear picture as to what its water supply situation really is. Only then will North Georgia be able to determine what its options are.

The small Alabama town of Guntersville knows that the sprawling, ever-growing metropolitan Atlanta area needs more and more water.

Meanwhile, some East Tennessee communities are learning the hard way about the challenges involved in identifying water supply options to satisfy growing demands. In late summer 2000, officials in Pikeville, a Bledsoe County community of approximately 1,800, closed schools and car washes, warned residents to boil drinking water, and asked local industries to cut back their consumption after three of the four underground wells from which the city draws its water failed. The failure was due to the unfortunate combination of growing demand and drought conditions.

Normally, local water demand is 400 gallons per minute — an amount that can usually be provided by one or, at most, two wells operating at once. However, two other events exacerbated the situation, making it unlikely that the city could function with a single well: A construction company working on a nearby highway bypass tapped into one of the city's three water storage tanks without permission, and the city had to temporarily shut

down the water treatment plant. Ironically, the plant was unable to function after heavy runoff following a rainstorm flooded the plant and led to the shutdown of its pumps. While the drilling of a fifth well provided a temporary fix, city officials are seeking to develop long-term plans to draw water from Dayton, a neighboring community that depends on the more reliable Tennessee River for its supply.

Considering Alternatives

Less than 30 miles to Pikeville's northeast is Crossville, Tenn., the county seat of Cumberland County, the fifth fastest-growing in the state. Crossville is yet another community facing conflict with its neighbors as it seeks to provide for its own future water needs.

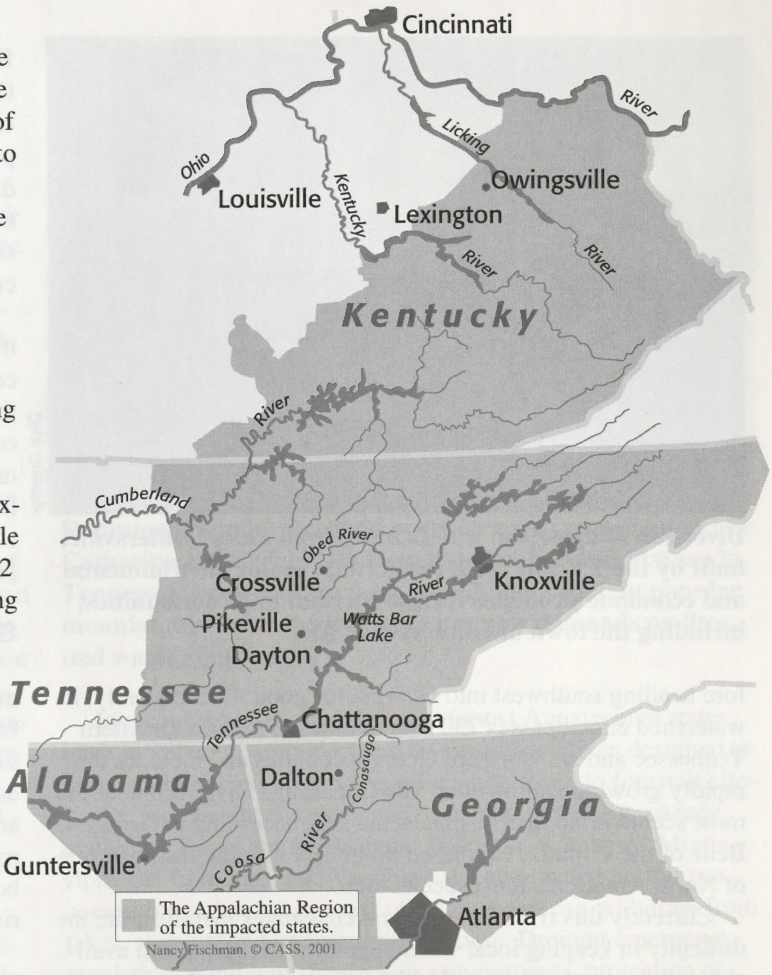
Its city council recently approved a plan to restrict further expansions by neighboring utility districts that purchase Crossville water—a power the city has by virtue of the fact that it sells 42 percent of its available water treatment capacity to four outlying county utility districts. Unfortunately, these county utility districts have few other options for new sources of supply. Worried that its own water sources are barely adequate for anticipated needs, Crossville officials are seeking to limit the ability of neighbors to tap into the city's two main reservoirs.

Meanwhile, Cumberland County has sought federal help in the form of a $5 million grant from Congress which, if made available, would empower the U.S. Geological Survey to develop a regional pilot program that would undertake a feasibility study of various water supply options and implement a long-term solution. While the ultimate choice among various water supply alternatives remains uncertain, the county will most likely adopt some combination of measures, such as pumping water uphill from TVA's Watts Bar Reservoir, located midway between Knoxville and Chattanooga on the Tennessee River; storing rainwater in new lakes and ponds; or building new dams on nearby creeks and streams.

Each of these proposals raises environmental, economic, and public-acceptability concerns that will be difficult to mitigate. For example, water flow in pristine waterways such as the Obed National Scenic River, located near Wartburg, Tenn., may be

In late summer 2000, officials in Pikeville, a Bledsoe County community of approximately 1,800, closed schools and car washes, warned residents to boil drinking water, and asked local industries to cut back their consumption.

adversely affected by new dams or by the diversion of water from nearby streams. While county and city residents, environmental groups, economic development officials, and politicians may never agree on a single solution, they would surely concur with Crossville city attorney Lanny Colvard's observation about the Cumberland Plateau: "There is only so much water on this mountain." The trick will be to address all of the various concerns satisfactorily and still be able to keep water flowing through the pipes.



Finally, residents of Owingsville and other Eastern Kentucky communities know firsthand how drought can affect water supply. In the summer of 1999, the city underwent a water emergency for several weeks. More than 60 water systems in 53 counties across the state had water shortage alerts or advisories in effect; those alerts and advisories affected over half a million people. As the drought continued into 2000, 60 counties across the state were put on a water shortage watch, and the state's natural resources cabinet began instituting measures under authority of Kentucky's drought management law to prioritize water needs, ban nonessential uses, and halt agricultural irrigation and the watering of livestock with treated water.

Managing Growth

Recently, Craven Crowell, retiring TVA chairman, asserted, "We believe that water supply and water quality issues, coupled with emerging water use conflicts over a fixed supply, will continue to increase across the Southeastern United States."

The perennial Appalachian aspiration to develop economically and diversify helps explain the emerging water supply—and water quality—problems in the region. Many Appalachian communities naturally favor activities that lead to rapid economic growth. Historically, however, they do not always properly manage the environmental impacts of that growth.

The experience of the Conasauga River exemplifies this problem. The headwaters of the Coosa River, the Conasauga rises in the Chattahoochee National Forest in North Georgia, then meanders in and out of Tennessee a half dozen times be-

Dixie Graphics

Diversion of upstream waters away from Lake Guntersville, built by the TVA in 1939, could cause major environmental and economic problems for the surrounding communities, including the town of Guntersville, Ala.

fore heading southwest into Georgia for good. Consequently, its watershed encompasses 730 square miles in two Southeastern Tennessee and six Northern Georgia counties and includes the rapidly growing Dalton area. The Conasauga River is one of the most scenic in Southern Appalachia and, according to George Benz of the Cohutta, Ga.-based Southeast Aquatic Institute, one of North America's most species-rich.

Currently this river faces several challenges that illustrate the difficulty in keeping local water supplies safe, clean, and available while sustaining growth. Major threats to the Conasauga's water quality, aquatic habitat, and biodiversity include excessive sediments from streambank erosion. In addition, it suffers from pollution originating in a variety of sources: fertilizers, animal wastes, and leaking sewer lines; toxic chemicals found in industrial and domestic wastes; and herbicides and pesticides used on farms and lawns.

Changing Patterns

In some Appalachian communities, economic growth and diversification resulted in rapid population growth that has led to unplanned urbanization and sprawl. In fact, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia are four of the nation's 10 fastest growing states — and certainly many of those states' Appalachian communities are full participants in that phenomenon. As we've already seen in the cases of Cumberland County, Tenn., and Whitfield County, Ga., these rapidly growing Appalachian counties are experiencing severe problems involving water shortages and competition over supply.

Moreover, as the population grows, demand patterns change. In Appalachia, as in other parts of the South, water consumption by heavy industry has actually declined as a result of efforts to recycle, reuse, and conserve water, inspired in part by the federal Clean Water Act and state pollution laws. Many companies discovered that the cheapest way to comply with pollution standards is to use less water in their manufacturing processes.

However, while industries are reducing their water use, domestic uses continue to grow, far exceeding population growth. Between 1960 and 1995, for example, while Alabama's population increased 30 percent, its domestic and public water uses increased an astounding 174 percent. Growth in domestic and public water use for Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee during this same period were 64, 93, and 82 percent, respectively. In some instances, an increase in the number of people served by public water systems, as opposed to private wells, accounts for this growth.

Tennessee's Cumberland County serves as a microcosm of this trend. Between 1990 and 1996, the county saw a 21.1 percent growth in new residents. Many of these residents are older migrants from northern climes who flock to new retirement communities in and around Crossville. They are attracted, as are other newcomers to Appalachia, by low taxes, a modest cost of living, and a temperate climate. That the Cumberland Plateau's streams are generally undependable as water supply sources is probably the furthest thing from the minds of these newcomers.

Shared Resource, Common Problems

The lack of clear, easy access to new supplies means that meeting this burgeoning, changing demand is no easy task. Between the 1930s and the late 1970s, the Southeast — and particularly Southern Appalachia — underwent a major period of dam-building. As a result, most good sites for storage reservoirs are now taken, and public opposition to new dams, due to environmental concerns and resistance to flooding out established homes and farms, makes pursuit of new large impoundments of rivers unlikely.

Individual communities cannot independently tackle the problems of developing new sources of supply and prudently managing demand. Most Appalachian cities and towns rely upon common water sources, such as wells and reservoirs, and share treatment facilities with neighboring cities and towns. Even those who are currently self-reliant — Pikeville, Tenn., for instance — hope to tap into a neighboring community's supply in the not-too-distant future as a means of securing a more reliable long-term source for water. Moreover, water sources do not respect political boundaries — and this is one of the greatest reasons for political conflict over water in the Appalachian region.

Worried that its own sources of supply are barely adequate for anticipated needs, Crossville officials are seeking to limit the ability of neighbors to tap into the city's two main reservoirs.

During a 1998 University of Tennessee-sponsored symposium on water supply problems in the Southeast, the U.S. Geological Survey's Jeff Armbruster noted that local conflicts over water availability are increasing throughout the South, in large part because urbanization and growing agricultural demands are increasing the economic and political interdependence of Southeastern communities. As the cases of Guntersville, Pikeville, and even Crossville illustrate, Atlanta's appetite for water — and that of other growing Sunbelt communities — affects not only communities within the same watershed but also poten-

tially cities in other river basins which lie in areas that could be tapped as future water sources.

A Patchwork of Laws

While resolving these conflicts would seem to cry out for some kind of legal remedy, laws governing management and allocation of water in Appalachia provide no panacea. In fact, one impediment to addressing Appalachia's water problems is the patchwork of written law, court precedent, and custom governing water rights, water allocation, and water supply. This legal patchwork is collectively referred to as "riparian doctrine."

Riparian doctrine — the principal water supply law in the Eastern U.S., including Appalachia — takes as its point of departure English common law and its concepts of "equity" and "reasonableness." In riparian states, an individual does not own water, and the user, also known as the "riparian," receives no guarantee of a specified *amount* of water. Instead, ownership of land bordering a stream or overlying an aquifer (an underground layer of sand or porous rock containing water) confers the right to use water. Generally a landowner is entitled to reasonable use of all the water flowing on, under, or through his or her lands, subject only to the rights of other downstream riparian landowners. Thus, the law permits reducing the flow of water only if the uses that diminish it are deemed "reasonable."

Therein lies the rub: While the riparian doctrine has served the region long and well, the concept of "reasonableness" has increasingly become a source of contention. Courts generally construe "reasonableness" to mean the right to draw waters from lakes, rivers, and streams so long as such use does not interfere with the "reasonable" uses of water by other individuals. In addition, courts have defined *reasonableness* to imply that each and every riparian has an equal right to a watercourse and that harm to other riparians must first be demonstrated before a particular use is held to be unreasonable. Such harm does not always embrace the damage done to fish and wildlife — only to people.

Many Appalachian communities naturally favor activities that lead to rapid economic growth. Historically, however, they do not always properly manage the environmental impacts of that growth.

Because the reasonableness test involves balancing the uses of one riparian against those of another claiming injury, controversies are often settled differently from place to place. Resolutions are influenced by the size of the stream; the adverse effects suffered by a landowner and other unique circumstances surrounding every conflict; differences in custom and tradition; and even the specific uses of water at issue. For example, in one Tennessee case a century ago, a court ruled that a riparian has an absolute right to take water for domestic use, even if it exhausts the stream. However, if the same stream were navigable in any sense, then, the court stated, the riparian must make allowance for the public's interest in navigation.

Heather Mullinex

Retirement homes surround snow-covered, man-made Lake Catherine at Fairfield Glade on the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. Pressures from increased population in popular mountain retirement areas have put new demands on limited water supplies.

In recent years, the legislatures of most Appalachian states have modified riparian doctrine by enacting statutes designed to make it possible to settle more efficiently, if not to forestall altogether, water rights disputes and to comprehensively manage water use. For example, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, the Carolinas, and Virginia have all adopted permit processes to regulate the amount of water a user can withdraw from lakes, streams, and underground aquifers. Drought emergency regulation, minimum stream flow requirements, protection of water-depleted areas, and the prevention of potentially harmful transfers of water from one basin to another are examples of other measures that have been put in place. The good news is that such reforms do permit states to address water supply problems proactively rather than wait for landowners to file suit against one another. The bad news is that changing the kinds of behavior that give rise to such disputes in the first place cannot be so easily legislated.

What More Needs to be Done?

All the water that ever was on our planet is still here. And there has always been — and always will be — drought. What has changed is our demand for water and our sometimes profligate use of it. Conflicts over water supply will continue to arise in Appalachia, as elsewhere, until we learn to deal with their underlying causes.

These causes include a lack of appreciation for water's economic value — it remains one of our most underpriced commodities — and inadequate public awareness over water's vulnerability to depletion in any given location. Educators, scientists, and other researchers must make an effort to better educate the public and decision-makers about the crucial role of water supply in our economic and environmental future. These same leaders also need to do a better job of developing water-related educational programs for our schools and to promote awareness among the public, industry, and elected officials of the importance of protecting and wisely using our water supply.

The general public must become willing to adopt reasonable

lifestyle changes. Water-conserving appliances and practices, such as low-flow toilets and showerheads, are becoming more widely available. Economic incentives that encourage water conservation as well as pricing policies that discourage wasteful use may also be worthwhile options to consider. Such incentives may include better metering of water use and time-of-use charges to deter use during peak demand periods. In Tucson, Ariz. — an area with severe water supply problems — the city levies fines for sprinkler systems spraying sidewalks and offers free evaluation of the efficiency of landscape irrigation systems. While we hope such relatively extreme measures never have to be adopted in Appalachia, such sobering examples should alert us to the potential challenges before us. Reusing wastewater or partially treated gray water — moderately degraded wastewater from, for example, washing dishes — might also be practical for some domestic uses, such as watering lawns.

We must also devise political solutions. We can begin by encouraging further cooperation among communities — both to lessen the costs of any new water supply alternatives and to reduce the adverse impacts of change. Cooperation among communities is often an underutilized strategy in Appalachia, in part because reliance upon federal intervention and largesse has made grassroots efforts seem nonessential. In the past, for example, the federal government was willing to help rural communities with new water supply and sewer systems at little or practically no cost to the communities themselves. However, the federal government no longer has a strong presence in the water supply business. Beginning in the early 1980s, Congress cut funding for river basin commissions, large multistate partnerships with federal agency representation charged with setting water supply priorities and undertaking long-term water resources planning. The federal government also began to issue cost-sharing mandates that required states and localities to foot part of the bill for water and other public works projects.

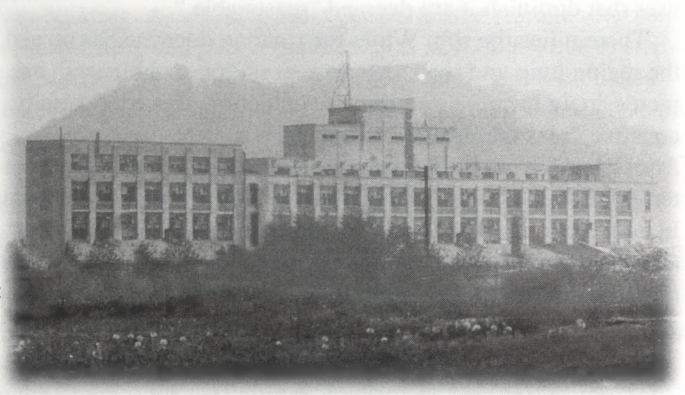
Between 1960 and 1995, while Alabama's population increased 30 percent, its domestic and public water uses increased an astounding 174 percent.

Thus, states and local communities have little choice but to draw upon their own resources and expertise to come up with long-term solutions to water supply and quality problems. In 1999, six independent water districts covering nearly 600 square miles in Cumberland County, Tenn., signed a letter committing themselves to work together through a compact establishing a regional water authority. The authority would do everything from "planning, acquiring, constructing, improving, extending, furnishing, equipping, financing, owning, operating and maintaining" a water and wastewater system to securing "economic benefits to the geographic region that it encompasses."

This new authority faces formidable challenges: rapid population growth, projected water shortages, and limited options for new, environmentally acceptable supplies. Nevertheless, we should applaud these communities for agreeing to work together rather than fighting one another.

Such efforts give credence to a long-standing generalization about Appalachia: While certainly a culturally distinct region, when it comes to natural resources, it is not as isolated from its neighbors — or from the nation as a whole — as its residents sometimes think. Long viewed as commodities vulnerable to exploitation by outsiders, Appalachia's natural resources — water included — serve to involve the region economically and politically in larger regional and national conflicts over competing demands for economic development and environmental protection. Just as no man is an island, so also is no region. Recognizing this fact might be the first step on the long journey toward wiser water use in our region. N&T

David Lewis Feldman is senior research scientist at the University of Tennessee's Energy, Environment, and Resources Center in Knoxville. He also teaches political science and environmental policy. The author of several books and articles on water and environmental policy, he convened the Southeast Water Supply Symposium and Roundtable and was involved in undertaking background research and other support on behalf of Tennessee's new Inter-basin Water Transfer Act, signed into law in the spring of 2000.



Archives of Appalachia, ETSU

American Bemberg

Watauga Valley, May 1929

In spring the river
lay like frayed rayon

looping and spooling
below the ridges

passing the mill's
immense reflection

back through its own
quiet machinery

—G.C. Waldrep

Third-prize recipient in Now & Then's *Year 2000 Appalachian Poetry Competition, G.C. Waldrep has also had poems published recently in* Poetry *and* Chattahoochee Review. *His book,* Southern Workers and the Search for Community, *published by the University of Illinois Press, was released in the summer of 2000.*

East Tennessee Journeys

The Photographs of Fred W. Behrend

by Linda Behrend

One of my early memories is of my father cautioning me to hold a photograph at the edges so that my fingerprints would not get on the picture.

I'm not sure when or why my father, Fred W. Behrend, became interested in photography and took it up as a hobby — or how he learned the skills that made him a recognized amateur photographer, both in the United States and abroad. Among his books, which are now in my possession, are several on photography, cameras, and photographic techniques, so I imagine he taught himself these skills, just as he was self-taught in many

Fred W. Behrend

"Frosty Morning." According to labels and stamps on the backs of various prints of the photograph, this bromide enlargement of a scene in Lynn Valley (Carter County, Tenn.) was first exhibited in 1937 at the 5th Annual Princeton Photographic Exhibit and the next year in Brussels and Luxembourg. In an *Elizabethton (Tenn.) Star* interview from January 1969, Fred Behrend stated that the photo also had been shown in Johannesburg, Tokyo, Australia, and Yugoslavia.

other areas. I do know that during the 1930s and early 1940s, he exhibited many of his black-and-white photographs internationally and that he continued to pursue his interest in photography for the rest of his life.

My father knew the backwoods and mountains of Upper East Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Western North Carolina so well. The mountains were his first love — where he found peace and God's glory. Still, his photographs of the rivers and valleys of Carter County, Tennessee, such as the ones featured in this photo essay, illustrate that he found beauty in all of nature. He used his unique talents to capture and preserve that beauty.

Fred W. Behrend

Untitled. Boys take delight in swimming in the Watauga River, most likely in the Sycamore Shoals area near Elizabethton, Tenn.

Fred W. Behrend

Untitled. This is probably the Siam railroad bridge over the Watauga River near Elizabethton, Tenn. The bridge was washed out in a 1940 flood.

My father, better known as "Freddie" to his friends and acquaintances, came to this country from Germany in 1926 at the age of 29. He had received the equivalent of an eighth-grade education in Germany and completed an apprenticeship as a stenographer. He came to Upper East Tennessee in response to an advertisement for a German-English stenographer at the American Bemberg rayon plant in Elizabethton.

The J.P. Bemberg Co. of Barmen, Germany, constructed the Bemberg plant in 1925, and production of rayon yarn began in 1926. It was joined in 1928 by a neighboring plant, American Glanzstoff Corp., built by the German rayon manufacturer Vereinigte Glanzstoff Fabriken, A.G. The plants later became American Bemberg Corp. and North American Rayon Corp., respectively, and were purchased in 1948

by Beaunit Mills of New York. During the early years, the rayon plants had an employee clubhouse, the Franklin Club. It was in the darkroom there that my father developed and printed his own photographs.

My father worked in the plants' executive office for 31 years. Following a major layoff, he joined the *Elizabethton (Tenn.) Star* in January 1958 as the local news editor, building on his experience decades before when he had worked in Germany at the Hanover office of Wolf's Telegraph Bureau, a news service similar to the Associated Press. In September 1958, he became the editor of the newspaper.

During his tenure at the *Elizabethton Star,* he put his skills as a photographer to good use; his pictures appeared in the paper countless times. He worked at the *Star* until his retirement in 1970. After that, he continued writing two outdoor columns, "The Naturalist's Corner" and

Fred W. Behrend

Untitled. Linda Behrend believes this photograph was taken on Roan Mountain looking down on the Burbank community of Carter County. "The Roan" was one of Fred Behrend's regular haunts. After Fred Behrend died, Bear Wallow Trail in Roan Mountain State Park was dedicated to his memory by an act of the Tennessee General Assembly. The marker reads: "Fred W. Behrend (1896-1976)—Naturalist and Lover of Roan Mountain."

Fred W. Behrend

"Evening on the Watauga." Twilight gives an impressionistic feeling to this bromide enlargement of a boat moored near the shore of the Watauga River.

"With and Of the Birds," both of which often featured his photographs.

Daddy was a nature lover. Whenever someone asked him if he hunted, he would tell them he only "shot" animals with a camera. He spent the better part of every weekend in the woods or mountains, hiking and studying up on whatever aspect of nature interested him at the moment. For many years, he studied birds, and many of the mountain people whose paths he crossed on his hikes called him "the bird man." Later, his interest shifted to wildflowers, mosses, and ferns. By this time, he was taking color slides of his "finds."

I can remember watching him set up his picture of some plant he had discovered on the forest floor, carefully arranging leaves and groundcover just the way he wanted them and then patiently waiting for the sun to come out or a cloud to move on. Only then would he take the shot that preserved the beauty of that moment. N&T

—Linda Behrend

Linda Behrend was recently appointed to the faculty of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville as catalog librarian in the Hodges Library. She was formerly a librarian at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City and at Virginia Intermont College, Bristol, Va. Her essay about her father, "Remembering Freddie," appeared in the 1996 anthology A Tennessee Landscape, People, and Places.

Courtesy of Linda Behrend

"Freddie" himself was captured on film during a Roan Mountain Wildflower Tour, an annual event founded by Behrend. Even while wearing khakis and galoshes in the field, Fred Behrend wore a tie.

Lessons *from* Ganderbill Holler

By Inez Fugate Liftig

An award-winning science teacher remembers her earliest classroom — an Eastern Kentucky holler.

On the map, Ganderbill Holler is just another little stream in one of the hundreds of narrow valleys that crisscross Breathitt County in Southeastern Kentucky — but it is so much more to me.

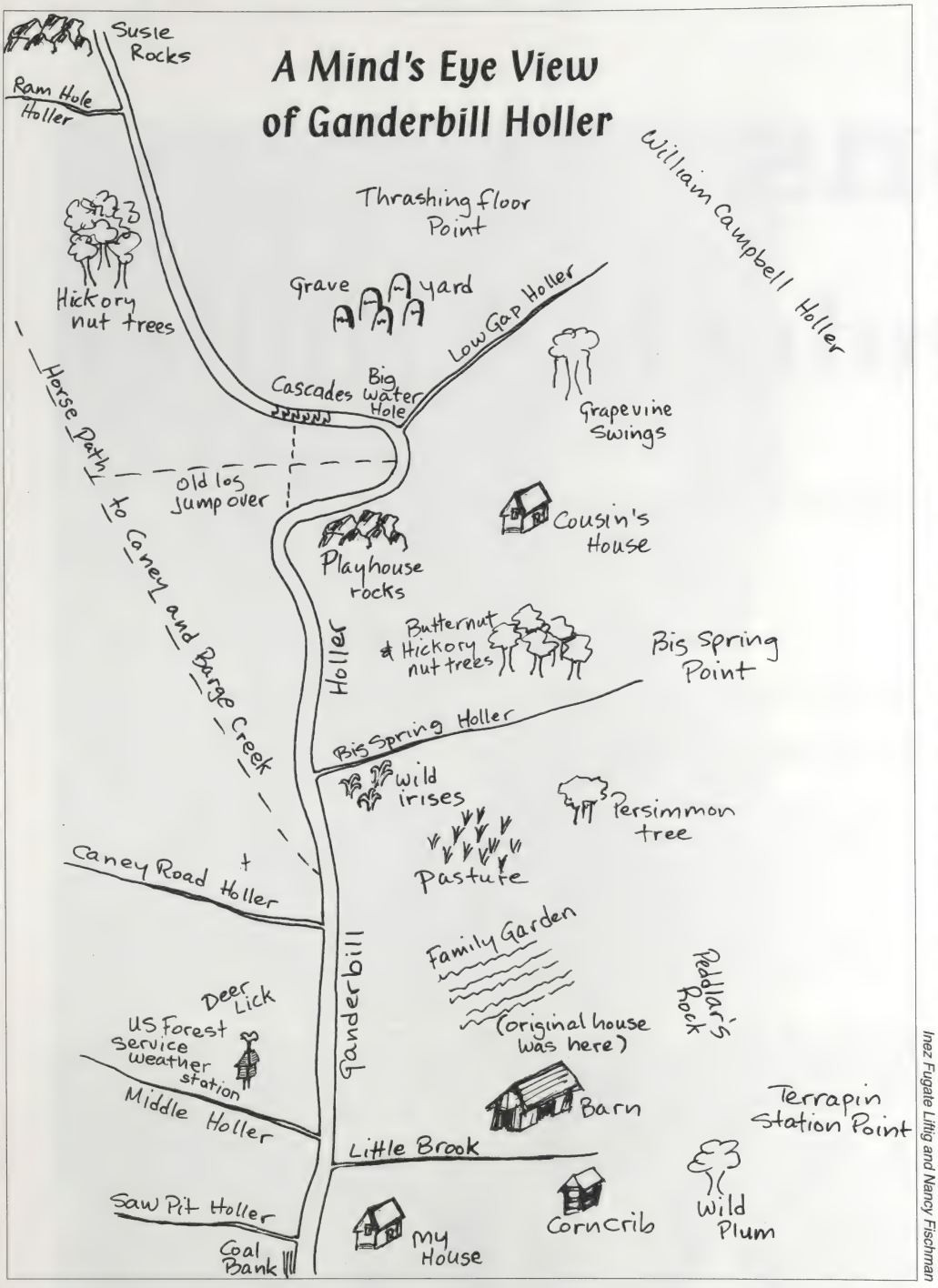
Ganderbill begins as several tiny "branches" that trickle out of the surrounding mountains and converge somewhere below Susie Rocks. By the time it passes Ram Hole Holler, it is clearly recognizable as one stream. From Ram Hole, Ganderbill twists and bends for about a mile — past Pheasant Holler and the overhanging cliff where my ancestors spent the first winter of their more than 200 years' residence in this little valley. It flows past the narrow bottomlands where they have toiled, hunted, played, rejoiced, planted gardens, raised children, and now lie buried on the nearby hillsides in family graveyards.

Ganderbill swings right by the mouth of the "coal bank" in front of my house — where my dad and his dad and on and on back generations have dug out the family's winter coal for their stoves and fireplaces. This is where my ancestors chose to stay awhile — the product of a diverse line of pioneers: Scotch-Irish, French Huguenot, Pennsylvania Dutch, English indentured servants, Scots Highlanders, and Cherokee Indians.

All the branches of the Ganderbill mean something to my family and me. Here's the place where Susie the lamb fell over the cliff. There's where the ram fell into a whirlpool. This is the stream that is fed at Big Spring Point, near Wolf Pen Holler, where my ancestors tried to capture the wolves that were eating their livestock, and here is Deep Holler, whose mountainsides are so steep, it was nearly impossible to scale them. Then there's Little Brook that has the best wild plums in the world, the same stream in which my grandfather — Old Man Gran — washed his face for the 104 years of his

Courtesy of Inez Fugate Liftig

Old Man Gran and Granny Julie watch after their grandchildren in front of Ganderbill Holler in the early 1950s. The author, Inez Fugate, is standing directly in front of Old Man Gran.



Inez Fugate Littig and Nancy Fischman

extraordinary life. The old-timers credited his longevity to his cold, early morning splashes in the water that fed Ganderbill.

The newly formed federal government deeded the land through which Ganderbill runs to my ancestors in payment for their service in the Revolutionary War. There are Indian graves on it, and there are still the remnants of early horsepaths down which Alex Noble and Henley Fugate (now the most common last names in the county) first brought my family into this country from the Clinch River in Virginia. Horse Cave at the head of the holler hid livestock from the marauding Yankees during the Civil War. One of those Yankees shot and killed my great-grandfather — not even a Southern sympathizer, just a mountain farmer milking his cow.

Remains of a thin footpath can still be seen running along the banks of Ganderbill. It was the only "road" to our house when a midwife delivered me by the light of a kerosene lamp in 1948. It wasn't until 1953 that my father got the first automobile to our house — a Jeep — so he could take his 103-year-old father to the hospital. He cleared all the large rocks and logs out of Ganderbill, using a winch to get the Jeep over the rocky cascades and landslides. Later, he leased a bulldozer and, with some money from the county, built a dirt road along the base of the hillside. Today it's a county road called Ganderbill Branch, and it's paved.

Our little holler with what is — to outsiders at least — the funny name is a typical example of the thousands of creeks and valleys that punctuate the landscape in Eastern Kentucky. They are named after real people and after things that happened to the first settlers. They are called Cutshin, Hell for Certain, Irishman's Creek, Troublesome, Quicksand, and Cockerell's Fork.

Ganderbill got its name from a rock formation. The rock is shaped like the bill of a duck or gander and found up near the head of the holler — right by my cousins' house and near the graveyard. The stream had to make a semicircle around that rock before it straightened out and continued on. The Ganderbill Branch is about 6 feet wide and gets to be as much as 2 feet deep at its mouth, where it empties into Lost Creek. Lost Creek flows into Troublesome Creek, which in turn merges with the South Fork of the Kentucky River, which leads to the Kentucky River proper, which joins the Ohio River, which spills into the Mississippi River at Paducah, Ky., and then, hundreds of miles later, floods across the delta into the Gulf of Mexico.

I grew up being able to recite this drainage chain. I remember marveling at how water from our little stream could travel such a distance. It somehow made Ganderbill seem even more important and part of a larger plan. Without our Ganderbill water, I wondered, would the ocean I had never seen be smaller?

In his younger days, Old Man Gran cut the tallest trees from the Ganderbill land and hauled the logs out by horse down to the South Fork of the Kentucky

River, where he and his cousins bound them together into rafts and rode them down the Kentucky River to Frankfort, Ky. There they sold them and no doubt raised a little commotion in town before they walked the 200 or so miles back home. I recall hearing my grandfather tell his tall tales and scary stories of those many trips and the rugged men who had made them.

R.A. Liftig

Inez Liftig throws rocks out of Ganderbill Holler after a rainstorm. Stripmines upstream have caused the water to run muddy.

Ganderbill was not just a lesson in history and geography, it was also a playground for my many cousins and me, the place where we spent a substantial part of our childhood. We didn't have television and didn't go to movies. We were not dropped off at ballet school or karate, nor could we stay for after-school activities (there weren't any). In the summer, we didn't go to camps — day, sleep-away, or any other. We were in the holler playing — all of us. Ganderbill was my most important school, and my granny, my mother, father, aunts, and uncles my greatest teachers. My cousins were the best classmates in the world.

Playing in Ganderbill, I learned many of the most fundamental concepts of biology, botany, hydrology, and geology — though we didn't have the scientific vocabulary to go with them. No, we learned the names Granny and Mommy taught us, like "waterdogs," "thundersluts," and "snake doctors."

When I began to study science in school, I was amazed at the drawings and explanations in our textbooks. Who on earth were these books written for? Didn't everyone know about erosion and how tadpoles turned into frogs or how spiders were different from the other bugs?

In the holler, we learned about animal characteristics and classification, habitats, behavior, reproduction, and life cycles. We learned how water flows, how it deposits its sediments, erodes the creek bank, and affects animals, the landscape, and the people. We learned about drainage patterns, the weather, and the seasons. We saw different rock types and learned which ones were harder than others and which might contain fossils. We studied the fossils we found and asked ourselves how long ago these images of leafy plants might have lived.

We were expected to be kind to the critters we played with, and we were told some imaginative stories to make sure we didn't harm them.

One such story dealt with snake doctors, the bright jewel-black, often iridescent dragonflies that filled the holler in the summertime. Granny told us never to catch or hurt one of them because they stung sick snakes, and the snakes got better. If a person were stung by one, however, it could be fatal. Later I learned that these beautiful flying creatures are called damselflies and are totally harmless. In fact, they are some of the best eaters of mosquitoes and other insects in the whole of nature. In hindsight, they were probably worth all of Granny's efforts to protect them.

There were other colorful stories told to protect other "helpful" animals: Don't play with little green grass snakes. If they bite you, you will laugh until you die. Don't kill a toad frog (another mosquito- and bug-killing machine) or else your family's cows will give bloody milk. Don't catch salamanders and hold them because if *they* bite you, they won't turn you loose until it thunders — so folks up and down Ganderbill called them thundersluts.

Later we guessed that some of these stories were not exactly true, but when pressed about their reality, Granny would just laugh and wink. Regardless of whether those tales were literally true or not, Granny's stories did teach us that there was something special about the creatures of our natural world. We learned about the interconnectedness among all of them and all of us.

I held the lessons from the holler close to my heart. I excelled in science at Little Red (what we called our schoolhouse) and quickly absorbed the vocabulary and Latin names to match my "hillbilly" nomenclature. Science came easy to me throughout high school, college, and graduate school. I double-majored in geology and biology and took many other science courses.

I have taught science in Connecticut and New York for over 30 years, and I refer every day to the lessons Ganderbill Holler taught me. But the holler did not give me only knowledge, it gave me a philosophy of teaching as well. I always want my students first of all to see, smell, touch, feel, and otherwise experience the

> Ganderbill was my most important school, and my granny, my mother, father, aunts, and uncles my greatest teachers.

wonders of the natural world. Let them play and laugh and learn together. Only after this do I bring out the textbooks and the terminology, the laundry lists of vocabulary, formulas, and scientific theories. My students seem to love learning,

and I love sharing in their joy of discovery.

When I was a child in the holler, my favorite seasons were spring and summer. Nothing was more delightful than the incessant, high-pitched, cricket-like calls of the hickety frogs (spring peepers or *Hyla crucifer*), which meant that winter had broken and spring had almost arrived. Soon there would be gardening, and soon there would be tadpoles. We stopped daily to check the ditches for frog eggs and watch the strings of clear eggs develop little black dots in the center. Those little black dots quickly grew into small critters with big eyes and tails, critters that began wiggling into tadpoles. We knew that to produce these eggs, the two frogs had to mate and that this was done by the male frog getting on top of the female. We not only saw metamorphosis in action, we also learned that only a small fraction of the tadpoles would develop into adults.

Anya Liftig

The author, Inez Fugate Liftig, stands with her mother, Vesta Fugate, in front of the Fugate house in Ganderbill Holler.

We had also seen dragonflies and other animals mating and learned that some baby animals hatched, while others grew inside their mothers and were born. We saw fish in the deeper pools and out in the bigger creeks fanning away gravel during the spring to make "nests" in which they would lay their eggs. Later, males would surely come along and fertilize those eggs. All of this was before people starting arguing about whether or not to bring sex education into the schools.

The holler was also a living poster for the scientific classification system, and we quickly recognized numerous patterns of body structure and behavior in both the vertebrates and invertebrates. We saw that all bugs did not have the same body shape and characteristics. Spiders, for example, did not have the same number of legs nor did they exhibit the same behavior as other bugs. Ants and wasps had three distinct sections to their bodies, while others didn't. Some could sting, while others could not.

Frogs and toads were similar but had different skins and habitats. Salamanders were certainly not all the same. Some were called "waterdogs" and lived in the leaves and under rocks by the branch; they could go in the water. Others seemed to be only in the moist areas by the water but never actually in the water. Still others — with red on their bodies — lived on land far away from the water, but nevertheless they favored moist, rotting leaves and logs.

Salamanders and lizards looked a lot alike but did not feel the same when you picked them up: The salamander was slimy and did not have claws. The lizard was dry and scaly and had claws. Both of them could drop their tails and escape.

We saw snake skins that had been shed and were told how the snakes lose their old skin in order to grow. Snakes may have looked similar, but we learned which ones were poisonous and which were not. Some, like the much-feared cottonmouth, lived in the water and swam around, while the blacksnake could climb all the way into the corncrib looking for mice and rats. I remember sitting spellbound once as I watched a snake eating a mouse in the cornfield.

We learned about plants as well as animals. We learned which plants grew only by the water, which were edible, which were poisonous, and which could be used for medicine and teas. Willows, for example, grew only by the water, while elderberry, witch hazel, sycamore, and redbud could grow on the slopes as well. You could steep willow branches and make willow bark tea to cure a urinary tract infection; in fact, willow bark contains a naturally compounded aspirin.

We saw various methods of seed formation and dispersal. The cocklebur caught onto a passerby for transport to other regions, and the touch-me-not (jewelweed or *Impatiens capensis*) relied on the explosive spring action of the pod to fling its seeds great distances.

We learned to recognize different leaf patterns on branches and stems: Some had only one flat leaf, while others were launched in groups of five and resembled a fan. One of my childhood favorites was the "cowcumber" tree (cucumber magnolia or *Magnolia acuminata*), which looked like an umbrella, with its whorl of 12- to 15-inch leaves coming off a common center that at times was a blooming flower and, at other times, a red seed pod. We used the leaves to make umbrellas so that we could continue playing in the holler even when it was raining.

As we grew older, another favorite that grew by the holler was the love vine. It was a bright yellowy orange, threadlike plant that grew covering other plants. It developed tiny little flowers sometime in its season. We would pinch a piece off and give it a name of a potential boyfriend. Then we'd tie that piece to another plant in an area where there was no love vine growing. If the named thread grew, then the person loved you, and the relationship had potential. But if it withered and died, so would the relationship. Later, I learned in a college botany class that this is a parasitic plant called a dodder. It can sink its little roots into the stems of other plants and draw away their nourishment.

Our lessons in hydrology and geology were memorable as well. We saw that the little streams that came off of the mountains flowed very straight and fast and that those that were in the flat bottom places were slower and could wander and bend around a bit. Elevation made a difference in the speed of flow. Later, I learned that this is called an elevation gradient and that the greater the difference in upstream and downstream elevation, the faster the speed of the water.

We saw the cutting power of water and, especially, of floods and fast-moving water. My cousins and I spent many hours throwing logs and debris out of the holler and piling rocks in against a bank to prevent the cutting action of the water. We also planted willow branches so they would hold the bank against erosion, preventing the garden from being washed away when the "tide" in Ganderbill was "running high," obviously a long-forgotten reference to the time, hundreds of years before, when my ancestors knew the ebb and flow of the oceans before they crossed the wide Atlantic to settle on Maryland's and Virginia's colonial shores.

When I first encountered suburban life, I admit to having felt somewhat culturally "deprived." I had not been on *Howdy Doody*. I had never seen *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

These are some of the lessons Ganderbill Holler taught me and, in an abbreviated fashion, has taught my own children as well on their many summer visits to Eastern Kentucky.

When I first encountered suburban life, I admit to having felt somewhat culturally "deprived." I had not been on *Howdy Doody*. I could not sing the 1950s jingle praising the merits of "Ajax, the foaming cleanser." I had never seen *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

I know now that it is the suburban kids — and not myself — who are deprived. I have managed to catch up with their electronic and media world, but most of the people who grew up in the suburbs still do not fully understand or appreciate the marvelous workings and fantastic wonders of the natural world. When all is said and done, Ed Sullivan and Howdy Doody can't begin to compare to my granny and my mommy — or to thundersluts, waterdogs, and snake doctors. Now I realize that, if I had a choice in the matter, if I had it to do all over again, I'd still want to be raised by Ganderbill Holler, to play in its waters and learn its lessons. N&T

Inez Fugate Liftig is a science teacher and consultant. A Kentucky native and former Peace Corps volunteer in Africa, she earned her bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Brockport and her master of arts in teaching from Fairfield University. In 1995 she was named Connecticut's Middle School Science Teacher of the Year, and her articles about science and science education are regularly published in national journals. She lives with her husband and two daughters in Westport, Conn. One of her daughters, Anya E. Liftig, contributed "A Clear Connection," an essay about the Kentucky branch of her family, to Now & Then's *summer 2000 Appalachian Accents issue.*

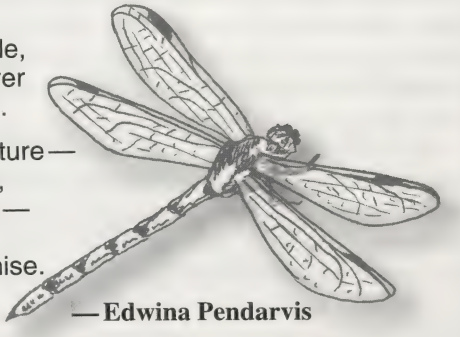
The Illusion of Rivers

My new pickup truck
must be alluring.
Every now and then, a dragonfly
hovers above it, dipping and gliding,
lands lightly, uncertain as a shy first kiss,
flies away then comes back,
in love too deep to resist.

Maybe it mistakes
the truck for a river, metallic-green
glinting in the summer sun.

Anyway, I *feel* like I'm steering a creek
when blue needles flirt
and flutter in front of me,
the tired Ohio flowing alongside,
solemn as the past already over
or the present constantly here.

My dragonflies must be the future —
darting just ahead on delicate,
transparent, net-veined wings —
bright, no matter how brief,
no matter how faulty the premise.



— Edwina Pendarvis

A regular contributor to Now & Then, *Edwina (Eddy) Pendarvis has also had poems and prose published in* Antietam Review, Appalachian Journal, Journal of Kentucky Studies, Louisville Review, Wind Magazine, *and other journals. Her essay, "Sunrise Museum," appeared in the Museums and Archives issue of* Now & Then.

Learning Happens

by Jo Ann Simmons

Aquaculture labs teach high school students math, science, & so much more.

People in rural communities are unique: They understand, better than most, the connection between science and their daily lives.

Occupations that are the hallmark of rural culture — such as crop agriculture, livestock management, and forestry — make scientific concepts a practical part of the way rural people earn their livings. To be effective, rural education must reflect this intimacy between science and the local culture.

In the past, education in rural schools has done little to engage students in science and math. Traditional textbook-driven science tends to present scientific concepts as an abstract set of disconnected facts; scientific laboratories are often sterile places where students carry out formulaic experiments. Seeing no connection between classroom learning and their daily lives, many students lack motivation and, as a result, are not prepared to be scientifically literate citizens.

An innovative program introduced in rural West Virginia and Alabama schools is doing its best to address this problem. It is a classroom and community outreach curriculum that integrates aquaculture — or fish farming — into vocational agricultural programs. The program is a joint project of the Small Schools Cooperative, the University of Alabama, and the Shepherdstown, W.Va.-based Freshwater Institute.

Cooperative Education

Aquaculture labs are part of an effort by the Small Schools Cooperative to bring about reform and engage the local community as a resource in education. The Small Schools Cooperative, an association of 29 public schools located in rural Alabama communities, is part of the Program for Academic and Cultural Enhancement of Rural Schools (PACERS). PACERS, in turn, is co-sponsored by the Alabama Coalition of Citizens for Excellence in Small Schools and the Program for Rural Services and Research at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. With funding from the Chattanooga, Tenn.-based Lyndhurst Foundation, a regional foundation with a strong commitment to education, these groups organized the cooperative in 1988 to create a forum where rural schools, previously isolated and "on their own," could share resources to build upon their collective strengths.

With the help of private grants, the PACERS Small Schools

Jim Miller

Students at Meek High School in Arley, Ala., discuss the construction of a small-scale aquaculture system they are helping to build. The laboratory is part of an innovative classroom and community outreach curriculum developed to make learning science more relevant to students' lives.

Marten Jenkins

A student performs a daily maintenance routine on the aquaculture system. Day-to-day care with minimum supervision allows the students to apply basic academic principles and to take ownership of the project.

Co-op developed a variety of formats, including computer-based programs and online networks, which allow teachers and students from many different schools to collaborate. One benefit was immediate: Teachers who had previously felt cut off from colleagues now had a forum for sharing ideas and experiences.

To bring about educational reform in science and other subjects, the PACERS Co-op has set three main goals, all of which the aquaculture labs help to realize: to enhance student skills by daily work in living laboratories; to develop highly trained

Seeing no connection between classroom learning and their daily lives, many students lack motivation and, as a result, are not prepared to be scientifically literate citizens.

teachers who understand the life sciences' connection to everyday rural life and are skilled in using living laboratories as a teaching tool; and to involve the community in the students' learning program.

The Freshwater Institute, the other major sponsor of the aquacultural living lab program, is an applied research program of the nonprofit Conservation Fund. Since 1987, it has been committed to developing practical, innovative approaches to the sustainable use of freshwater resources, an essential foundation for livable communities. From its research campus in Shepherdstown, W.Va., the Institute strives to develop and evaluate sustainable solutions to resource-based economic development in rural communities.

Spawning an Interest in Aquaculture

In 1994, with funding support from the PACERS program, the Freshwater Institute developed its Aquaculture in the Classroom Initiative, designed to allow high school students to engage in small-scale aquaculture. At the outset, the initiative established aquaculture learning labs in two rural Alabama schools — one in Arley, located about 40 miles northwest of Birmingham in the Appalachian county of Winston, and the second in Florala in the southern part of the state. Those labs consisted of a wet lab for water testing and a small-scale system for raising tilapia, a freshwater fish native to Africa.

PACERS director Jack Shelton, who worked closely with the Institute in both the planning and implementation of the aquaculture labs, drew on his extensive background in both community development and in rural health and education. He saw this program as a way to teach a variety of applied subjects that demonstrate the relevance and interconnectedness of traditional core subjects. "These units are not just effective science labs," says Shelton. "They also provide an opportunity for career training." For its part, the Institute sees aquaculture as a good fit with rural communities because of fish farming's capacity to enhance economic development, its transparent impact on the environment, and its compatibility with rural lifestyles.

Learning by Doing

At Meek High School in Arley, students helped build an aquaponics lab based on a model designed by the Institute. Aquaponics integrates aquaculture with hydroponics, the term for growing plants in a nutrient solution rather than in soil, and uses byproducts from fish culture to grow plants. In this closed culture system, water is pumped from fish tanks to the plant beds. The vegetables in the gravel beds absorb the waste produced by the fish, a high quality plant food; the clean water then returns to the fish tanks for re-use. The system recycles water through a network of pipes, with only about 5 percent replacement water added each day. The system produces about 500 pounds of marketable tilapia each year. The model designers chose tilapia because it is a hardy, fast-growing, high-value fish with a delicate flavor similar to perch.

Marten Jenkins, director of the Institute's entrepreneurial and training development program, says aquaculture learning labs are a valuable tool. They can illuminate core subjects through interactive, hands-on management of the fish. "As these kids get involved in the day-to-day care of the system, they can relate and apply basic academic prinicples to fish culture, water treat-

One benefit of the new cooperative was immediate: Teachers who had previously felt cut off from colleagues now had a forum for sharing ideas and experiences.

ment, and environmental management. Science becomes 'real' to them," says Jenkins. "They learn to 'do science' rather than just learn 'about science.'"

Students in the aquaculture program investigate aquatic chemistry, fish health, animal nutrition, reproduction, fish be-

havior, engineering, and a host of other disciplines not usually taught in traditional settings. When the application of conceptual knowledge complements and reinforces core subjects, learning becomes personally meaningful, says Jenkins.

Inside the Labs

There are no Bunsen burners in these labs, no long rows of slate-topped tables, no blackboards. There can be no mistakes, no spilled chemicals, no sloppiness in handling of equipment, for this is a classroom of a different sort. Inside the living labs are fish and plants that need constant meticulous care. At each stage of development, the fish have particular needs that must be met by the students — or the consequences can be disastrous.

Meek High School vocational agricultural teacher Terry Youngblood says he witnesses amazing transformations when he gives students responsibility. "When students find out that ignorance, neglect, or poor work can have serious consequences — that plants or animals can actually die — new leaders will arise from the ranks of some of the most unlikely students." They feel a sense of ownership of the fish and plants and want to take good care of them.

With minimal supervision, the students operate and maintain the system, applying basic principles of biology, chemistry, physics, and math to water treatment and environmental management. Taking on the roles of scientists, they use scientific concepts to sample fish populations and determine population statistics through the application of applied mathematical principles used in basic ecology. Careful record keeping allows calculation of economic costs and system performance. Students also learn business management and basic accounting principles as they harvest tilapia for school dinners or sell them to local markets. Live fish bring about $1.50 per pound, while fillets bring $4 to $5 per pound. Any money made from selling the fish goes to buy the next generation of fish and to make repairs to the system, according to Youngblood.

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Youngblood says students are anxious to work with the fish, and the aquaculture class fills up fast. Senior Justin Bell says, "The aquaculture class makes us learn science and math instead of memorizing the information for a test — and then forgetting it." Classmate Nathan Fincher agrees: "The class allows us to use the information learned in other classes in real life situations. It shows us a reason to learn science and math." Operating the system teaches practical skills. "And they're skills they can take with them into the job market," says Youngblood.

Harder to measure, but equally as valuable, students learn how to solve problems in ways not usually found in most traditional classrooms. They develop positive work ethics and learn social skills along with science and math. These values eventually find their way back into the community.

Shared objectives — even simple ones such as feeding the fish — encourage teamwork and cooperation, says Youngblood. "When some of the fish die, they all pitch in to find out why." One group takes a water test to determine if water parameters for dissolved oxygen, ammonia, nitrate, and alkalinity, or pH, levels are out of range. A second group dissects the fish and looks under a microscope for evidence of parasites or disease, while a third records the data from the other two groups. All three analyze the information, says Youngblood. "Once they determine the cause of death, they work together to find a solution to keep the other fish from dying."

Marten Jenkins

Constant meticulous care, such as the water quality testing performed by these students, ensures that the fish and plants in the aquaculture system will survive and thrive. Students learn that there is no place for neglect or poor work in this living laboratory.

Web-Based Learning

As a result of the vision of the PACERS staff and the success of programs such as the aquaculture learning labs in Arley and other communities, the PACERS rural education program is expanding its rural science initiative. With assistance from the Appalachian Regional Commission, a federal agency that works to support economic and social development in the region, the Small Schools Co-op seeks to strengthen the link between schools and their communities. At the same time, it develops

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business and entrepreneurial skills that will provide the infrastructure for a diversified local economy.

In a current initiative, the PACERS group is working with the Freshwater Institute extension staff to develop a web-based aquabusiness course for schools in rural Alabama counties. Students will operate the fish system to develop technical knowledge and increase their skills in research and critical thinking. In addition, according to Institute director Joe Hankins, the web-based course will be set up to teach entrepreneurship and business skills. "They won't just take care of fish — they will design business plans and calculate operating costs just as if the business were real."

There are other benefits as well, says Hankins. "By studying water flow efficiencies and the capture and treatment of fish waste, they will learn about environmental sustainability and why it is important." Hankins hopes that by operating a successful business partnership, students will develop a sense of community involvement and become more attuned to the needs and resources of their community. Community support teams made up of teachers, PACERS staff, and consultants from the Durham, N.C.-based Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning, a nationally recognized provider of youth and adult entrepreneurship education, will provide mentoring for the students.

A quick look at Alabama's aquaculture and recreational fishing industry illustrates the role of aquaculture in the state's economy. With a total economic impact of nearly $2 billion, fish farmers grow approximately 25 species in the state for food, recreational stocking, bait, and ornamental markets. A 1998 U.S. Department of Agriculture census puts Alabama fifth in the nation in the value of aquaculture products sold. One of

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the fastest growing segments of the state's economy, fish farming provides a bright future for trained aquaculture entrepreneurs and technicians.

Living laboratories continue to play a significant role in rural schools because they capitalize on students' natural acceptance of applied science curriculums — an acceptance born of longtime involvement with natural resource-based activities. They create a culture in which students apply learned concepts in ways that are relevant to their lives and their community. The success of the PACERS-brand of rural education in Alabama shows that when science becomes something more than a dull book read before a test, learning happens. N&T

Jo Ann Simmons is a freelance writer and technical assistant at the Freshwater Institute in Shepherdstown, W.Va.

Steele Creek Nature Center, Bristol, Tenn.

Stories

The National Weather Service calls this
a sheltered river valley. Soon
my daughter will live on southern
piedmont because she is getting married
which makes everyone remember
something: my mother engaged
on the banks of the Kankakee
during the Depression when
there wasn't enough money to marry.
The groom's mother's story
of Syrian sons warned not
to marry American women who would
slit their throats, she who
married an American man
against her mother's tears.
I married because of a war.
Drafted anyway, my husband joined
the Navy. We turned down airfare
and drove from California
to Rhode Island because we wouldn't
give up a dog. In a cheap motel
in Flagstaff, snow falling,
I thought we were lost.
A pair of Canada geese have stayed
the spring on this stretch
of the river. Years from now
my daughter may remember watching them
swim circles against the current.
They are known to mate for life.

—Sandra Marshburn

Sandra Marshburn's poems have appeared in a variety of publications. Her chapbooks include Controlled Flight *and* Undertow. *She teaches writing courses at West Virginia State College and lives in Charleston, W.Va., on the Elk River.*

Time Flies

by Doyle Bickers

He noticed the boy watching him while he fished. The youngster believed himself to be hidden in the dog hobble that infested the bank of the stream. It's funny. Children are sure that you can't see them when they are hiding. They believe they are like fairies, capable of being invisible at will. The boy hadn't thought about his white T-shirt that glowed above his faded jeans in the afternoon light.

The man was reminded of the city fishermen who came to the stream sporting their expensive white fishing shirts made

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by name brand outfitters. Those shirts waved like lanterns against the rhododendron along the banks. They shouted, "Here I am, fish. I'm a fisherman. Run for cover." It made him laugh—and they wondered why they caught so few fish.

He fished for another fifty yards and then climbed the bank. As he walked back down the road, he saw the boy sitting on a log. He wanted to speak, to say something kind, but the boy surprised him: "I'm a fisherman, too. And a good one."

"I'll bet you are," the man said.

"I use worms and hoppers, but my dad says I can have one of those rods like yours for my birthday." The boy referred to the fly rod resting across the man's shoulder.

"Fly rods are fun," the man said. "I bet you'll be good with one."

"I saw you catch that big one," the boy confided. "What'd you get him on?"

"An Elk-Hair Caddis," the man answered. "Size fourteen." The boy hesitated. It was an age-old conversation between fly fishermen—a ritual. But the boy didn't know the terms. The man lowered his eyes. He felt the boy's embarrassment. "This is the fly I used." He handed the fly to the boy.

"Sure is little," the boy mused. The toe of his shoe dug circles in the dust along the edge of the road.

"It matches the hatch—I mean, it looks like the bugs on the water," the man added.

"I know," the boy grinned. "It's like when I tie on a piece of red wool to look like a worm. I do it up there in the place where you can't use bait." He was referring to the section of the stream where state regulations required the use of artificial lures. The man smiled back at the boy who had discovered an innovative way to catch fish in a tough situation.

"Exactly," the man encouraged. "It's similar to the fly we call a San Juan worm, but yours is probably better." The boy beamed from the compliment.

"Here, take these." The man held out a small plastic box. The boy's clear gray eyes pierced him. They squinted and then opened wide as if they vacillated between distrust and rapture. "No, I mean it," the man said. "I make a lot of flies, and I enjoy giving them to other fishermen. You can have them. I have plenty."

He envied the boy. He thought of himself, in the middle of middle age, but he could still remember the trembling and the excitement he had felt when he was a boy. That was when he approached each pool in each stream as if it were a pretty schoolgirl he had just seen for the first time.

It was a few weeks after his encounter with the boy that he had an idea. The idea was typical of his approach to life. It was simple and practical, yet it would give him a little bit of pleasure and peace over the years. This idea fit with other strange things he had been thinking at that time. Maybe it was just the rethinking that comes in midlife. He thought about the term *midlife* and wondered if

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And in a small mountain community, everyone knew everything. When life became the most difficult, he would retreat into the mountains to fish for trout. The fish were easier to deal with.

He had wandered some after the divorce. Two tours in Vietnam had left their mark as well. Throughout those years, he had wondered about his purpose in life and where he had gone wrong. He thought about his legacy. Would he leave the world a better place? Did it matter that he had lived? Sometimes it got pretty heavy.

After the war, he returned to the local college to study. He was surprised to find he was good at mathematics. Becoming a teacher was almost an accident. A math professor told him he "had the gift" and should share it with others. It was just enough of a guilt trip at the time, but the professor had been right, and he never regretted the choice. He particularly liked

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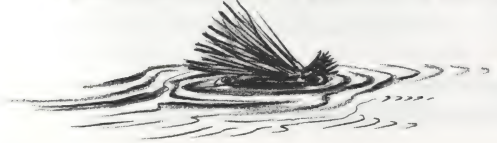

when the idea came to him. It wasn't profound, but it seemed special to him, a gift from the mountain.

Stimulator

It's easy to become pensive when you're sitting deep in a hollow. Breezes swirl around you. And there are sounds — a rustling in the leaves or the swishing of unseen wings — sounds that seem to have no identifiable source. These are felt as the spirits of the woods.

There was probably an additional explanation for this seemingly strange idea. Friends told him he was obsessed with his fishing, particularly with the small flies he made from fur and feathers.

His love of making flies had evolved from his love of fishing. Over the years, he found himself observing the insects along the stream and how they behaved. He kept thinking that if the flies he bought at his local store were just a little different, he would catch more fish. One day, he had happened upon another fisherman who was sitting beside a stream with a portable fly-tying kit. This angler was attempting to emulate a small brown mayfly that the fish were taking.

Like the trout for which he fished, he was hooked. He ordered a kit from a catalog and began to experiment. After many failures, innumerable books, and several classes at a local fly shop, he developed a reasonable competence.

Obsessions can produce what seem to be mystical moments for those obsessed. What sprang from that moment — sitting by the creek, thinking about his life — was a plan for his final fishing trip. He knew there had to be one eventually. His idea was to tie the flies he created a slightly better version. He knew from the vision that he had experienced while sitting on the rock exactly how he would use them on that last trip.

He began with a collection that contained dozens of different patterns. At first, there were colorful streamers (minnow imitations) with brass bead heads and nymphs made from the hair and fur of deer, mink, muskrat, fox, rabbit, and squirrel. There were floating imitations crafted from the feathers of grouse, pheasant, rooster, and occasionally a backyard songbird who dropped plumage in convenient spots.

After a few years, the collection began to focus on fewer patterns. These were his favorites, the flies that produced the most fish for him. This was natural as his expertise increased. He found that a few well-made flies would suffice for most situations. Mountain trout are opportunists. With a limited food supply, a reasonable representation is adequate. He kept many patterns to use on his trips, but his special collection narrowed to six.

Bead Head Scruffy

First, there were the dry flies, the ones that floated on the surface. The Parachute Adams became his favorite. With a high vertical wing that made it stand out in rough water, it was a gray fly that imitated numerous species of mayflies that hatch in the Southern Highlands. The Elk-Hair Caddis was tan in color. The long wing extending along the back looked like both the caddis flies and the pale stoneflies that were important to the summer diet of trout.

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Lee Smith

"When people ask me about Appalachian life and lore, ***Now & Then*** is the first periodical I direct them to. It brings a feeling of mountain life and people that is irreplaceable, matched in no other publication, Appalachian or otherwise. ***Now & Then*** is always a welcome presence in our house."
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*"**Now & Then** keeps me in touch and informed, and is a must for anyone interested in the past, present, and future of the region."*
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he would really live to be one hundred and twelve.

The origins of his idea went back to his college years. He had been training to be a minister, or so he thought at the time. That was before a painful divorce and the resulting bout with bourbon. He had survived, but the scars were still there. He had been raised in a staunch Southern Baptist family where alcohol and divorce were for the unsaved. And in a small mountain community, everyone knew everything. When life became the most difficult, he would retreat into the mountains to fish for trout. The fish were easier to deal with.

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After the war, he returned to the local college to study. He was surprised to find he was good at mathematics. Becoming a teacher was almost an accident. A math professor told him he "had the gift" and should share it with others. It was just enough of a guilt trip at the time, but the professor had been right, and he never regretted the choice. He particularly liked having his summers off. He could hike deep into the mountains to pursue trout. The dreams that came in the night, the pain he still felt: These evaporated with the mist that rose from the stream at first light. All of these events and feelings had brought him to this point in his life.

He thought of himself, in the middle of middle age, but he could still remember the trembling and the excitement he had felt when he was a boy. That was when he approached each pool in each stream as if it were a pretty schoolgirl he had just seen for the first time.

Now he found himself sitting on a rock beside one of his favorite streams. He thought back on the boy he had met a few weeks earlier, a boy who had helped him relive some good memories from his own childhood. This was when the idea came to him. It wasn't profound, but it seemed special to him, a gift from the mountain.

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fly, but it was a disheveled beast that imitated grasshoppers, larger stoneflies, large mayflies, and heaven knows what else. There were times the trout loved them.

A Hare's Ear was his first choice for a sinking or wet fly. It imitated a mayfly nymph — and, yes, it was made of the fur from a rabbit's head. The Bead Head Scruffy was one of his own creations. It had a brass bead for a head, bristling legs, and sank deep. It caught many fish for him. His final choice was a Wooly Bugger. This hairy monstrosity represented large stoneflies, sculpins, and other creatures that aggravated trout. It worked especially well on freshly stocked hatchery fish that hadn't become wise to the ways of fishermen.

This was his selection. It was nothing special. There were no exotic collectibles. These were basic flies that would catch fish day in and day out across Appalachia. He walked out of the woods that day with his idea.

The years slipped by like the water that gurgled past him in the creeks. He fished and tied flies. He taught math to the children of people who had been in his classes many years before. Along the way, he remarried. Helen: He liked to refer to her as his "best catch, the one that didn't get away."

This was when the idea came to him. It wasn't profound, but it seemed special to him, a gift from the mountain.

He visited new streams throughout the mountain region. Wherever he went, he shared his flies. Other people would give him their special creations, but the six patterns in his "idea" box never changed. When he tied a new version of one that pleased him more, he would pass the old one along to someone else — often to the kids he met along the creeks.

The doctor's prognosis had not been pleasant to hear: "Two months, if you behave yourself." He wondered whether that meant that he would only have one month if he didn't behave himself — or did that possibly give him ten years if he opted to live it up? He knew better, but the thought amused him.

He began the climb up the stream bank to where his truck was parked. It was twelve weeks since he had gotten the news from the doctor. He felt proud to have beaten the prediction. As he pulled himself up on a piece of honeysuckle vine, a sharp pain in his chest forced him to sit down. He was halfway up the bank.

A protruding root had been exposed by countless wading boots eroding the ground around it. He was grateful for fellow anglers who had provided this perch for his rest. "I'm not going to die here. I won't be humiliated by their having to 'find the body.' " Heaven knows, he'd been on enough searches for lost fishermen himself. He knew how the searchers talked. "Probably some damn fool from Atlanta. Couldn't find his way out of a john." No, he was going home. Helen wouldn't have to anguish over where he might be tonight.

He coughed and wiped some blood from his chin. "Well, this is it. It's hard to believe. Doesn't seem like sixty-three years." In the twilight, something caught his eye. It was a purple flower, a gentian. The oblong blossoms glistened from a drizzle earlier in the afternoon.

Suddenly, it was forty years earlier. He was on Hazel Creek, where he had climbed high to the headwaters. Beautiful brook trout attacked every fly he placed on the water. It was one of the few times he had tired of catching fish.

As he sat on the bank, he remembered other places. It seemed it was the flowers, birds, rocks, breezes, and smells he remembered most. There had been a trip when he was climbing above a raging rapid. The going was difficult, and he had almost fallen. As he pulled himself around a rock, he was confronted with the most beautiful columbine plant he had ever seen. It was spectacular. No nursery could have groomed a more perfect specimen. He could still feel the mist, smell the sweet odor of rotting trees, and sense the awe in that moment.

And there were the people. He had fished, laughed, drank, cried, and swapped stories with some incredible folks. He felt very lucky. They had shared much with him.

It was getting dark. He watched the dimples and rings of the fish rising in the river below him. He knew it was time to complete the plan, to bring closure to the idea that had come to him that day seven years before. It seemed like yesterday.

He unzipped the inside pocket of his fishing vest. He lifted the little box out, raised the lid, and looked inside. Yes, the flies were pretty good, but if only he had more time …

He closed the box, eased down the bank, and stepped into the water. He felt it pull against him. Again, he opened the box that held the six special flies. He leaned down and carefully turned it over, emptying the contents into the river. The dry flies bobbed off downstream, and the wets began to sink. It warmed him in the cool evening air to think of those flies settling on the bottom — a part of him that would remain there. He watched as the dry flies continued floating away. Suddenly, a trout rose to the Elk-Hair Caddis. The fly disappeared, but in a split second, the fish rolled, spitting out the imposter.

He laughed. It seemed right. He turned and looked up at the top of the bank behind him. It was time to go home. N&T

Doyle Bickers serves as the director of admissions at Auburn University in Auburn, Ala. He is a past president of the Appalachian Studies Association and an avid trout fisherman. When not working, he returns to the Southern Appalachian mountains to "replenish his soul." He likes to believe that Thoreau was thinking of a kindred spirit when he wrote, "His fishing was not a sport, nor solely a means of subsistence, but a sort of solemn sacrament and withdrawal from the world, just as the aged read their Bibles."

The artwork accompanying this story was drawn by Richard Tumbleston, Boone, N.C.

Blue Beach

by Kelley Rae

Running just west of the town at the base of the South Branch Mountain, of peculiar attractions, is the fast flowing river. Here the tourists and seekers of pleasure find cool nights in summer, and glowing hearthstones in winter, wild game in the mountains for winter sport, and abundant fishing in the far-famed river. Certainly no sportsman can be found who is in ignorance of the "Branch" and its stories.

—Taken from the 1909 publication, *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants: A History of Frederick County, Virginia* by Thomas K. Cartmell.

I was 10 when my father died, the summer of 1969. Summer was like another country then—exotic, wild, and filled with possibilities.

My family and I spent all of our summers at a place we called camp—not our camp or the camp, just camp. My grandfather bought our first camp when I was just a baby. The first was further back from the river. Even though it was quite large, we sold it and bought the smaller one up close. We all shared in the camp's ownership.

We never thought of going anywhere else. Usually my father was absent from my life, except when we were at camp. And we stopped going shortly after he died, so I often think of them together.

Camp was located on the South Branch of the Potomac along state Route 28 going toward Romney in Hampshire County, West Virginia. It sat on an oval-shaped road with other lopsided buildings people called home from June to September. Grandma and Granddad's house was in Mineral County, so we had to go southeast on Route 28 past Short Gap, Fort Ashby, Springfield, Millison's Mill, and Wappocomo. It wasn't far from where my ancestors operated a tavern after they arrived from Ireland and Scotland.

The South Branch of the Potomac River merges with the Potomac's North Branch near Green Spring, West Virginia, after it comes down from the Shenandoah Mountains in its north and south forks. When the spring rains mixed with the melting snow from the tops of the Shenandoah Mountains, our river could become a great threat as it rushed to the North Branch. It could swell to many times its size, sweeping along the banks, carrying with it anything in its path. My grandfather repeatedly told me the story of the "Great Flood." He used to say, "Homes and bridges vanished under the torrents of this here raging river as if they'd never been." I have seen photos of this kind of devastation—cows stuck under bridge girders, houses crumpled like accordions, cars standing on end against telephone poles.

Just as we all have unique fingerprints, each river has its own motion and sounds. I'd know this river's sound anywhere. The riverbanks protected us from the outside world, filtering out the bad. It was

Otis Martin

The view from Blue Beach, 1959.

also equalizing—we were all the same there. Adults returned there each year, turning into children again. All the constraints of modern times were left behind.

When Dad went to camp, I could see his concentrated stare lift from his face. The frowns disappeared like the soothing ripples of the river traveling shoreward. He was a child like I

Otis Martin

Grandma Aggie holds the author, "Sissy," while a cousin looks on at the family's first camp in 1959.

was a child in the brief time we were there each year. The Fourth of July was his favorite day. He hammered pinwheels on the trees, stuck bottle rockets in the damp shore, and appeared more excited than we kids. I can see him walking along the shore with Argus, his muscular German shepherd, a trained police dog that rarely left Dad's side. Argus was a part of camp, too, roaming the campground searching for prey, which in his case happened to be beer cans. He chewed them until his gums bled. The men at camp

> Just as we all have unique fingerprints, each river has its own motion and sounds. I'd know this river's sound anywhere.

were awed by his amazing ability to gnaw through a metal can in minutes. He was a powerful brute and truly my father's best friend, next to Grandma.

Dad and Grandma were close, as close as any mother and son could be then. He inspired in her a certain freedom she lacked elsewhere. Grandma's attachment to Dad grew outward to include her relationship with his kids, especially me. Grandma made up for the time my father didn't have for me.

The ritual of preparing for a summer at camp was exhausting. My brother Wayne and I helped Grandma load up the Ford station wagon with the contents of the cabinets. We would have cans of A&P soda stacked on top of one another, suitcases, laundry baskets, cleaning supplies, and every pot and pan in grandma's kitchen loaded into that car. Wayne and I dragged supplies from every corner of her house, grabbing and stuffing, hoping we wouldn't forget anything. We climbed into the car and drove the 20 miles to camp—long miles for children. Grandma drove that old car with her square chin set like she was on a mission. We would meet everyone else at camp—Mom, Granddad, my baby sister Sue, and my cousins Darlena and Kanneta. My father traveled a lot in his job, so he would come down for the weekend.

I could always tell when we were halfway to camp by the moisture in the air. The pungent mustiness of the river's edge drew me in closer with each mile we crossed.

Dad was the youngest troubleshooter Sun Oil Company had ever had, which meant we moved to wherever there was a problem until he fixed it. Dad was a charmer. He went from location to location, charming the people into doing what he wanted, and then he would move on, with his family in tow. Unfortunately for us, he was good at what he did, so we moved from place to place and town to town. We were always moving for one reason or another. Camp became the only constant for us.

Dad was fond of fast cars and motorcycles. The only problem was that he continually wrecked them. Not only did he damage most of them beyond repair, but he also managed to mangle a body part of his own in the process.

My father was like that—he demanded attention. Once he walked into a room, all attention turned toward him. He was overwhelming to me. I shrank in his presence. He was large and loud, and he frightened me most of the time. Everyone idolized him, his crazy antics, and his way of treating people better than they expected.

He was better than some men were and worse than others. He and my mother had an off-again, on-again relationship and were even divorced once and then remarried. He was hard on Mom, expecting her to be all the things he wasn't. He hit her on more than one occasion. I was a witness to some of this although we all managed to hide it well. I never really knew the extent of his outbursts until my mother told me when I became an adult. I suppose few things are flawless.

All in all, we came to expect things to happen when Dad was around, not necessarily good things either. Another thing we didn't have at camp was the law. The law only came if it followed my father.

When I heard the siren, faintly at first, I knew it would be Dad. He had a knack for

> When Dad went to camp, I could see his concentrated stare lift from his face. The frowns disappeared like the soothing ripples of the river traveling shoreward.

causing calamity. He flew over the bridge, his roadster motorcycle barely touching the road. He made a left turn from the bridge onto Long Road, and then he cut through a neighbor's yard and parked behind our camp. He hopped off, kissed Mom, hugged Grandma, tousled Wayne's hair and said, "What's for dinner? I'm starved." Meanwhile, the sheriff slowly cruised by, tracking my father's route, stopping and looking at each camp for a few seconds, then moving on. He slowed to a stop like he was going to get out and ask questions about Dad, but then Argus took off after his car and tried to gnaw the bumper off, so he kept moving. I looked at the sheriff's car, then at Dad. His casual attitude was enough to relax me.

Granddad asked, "You be driving too

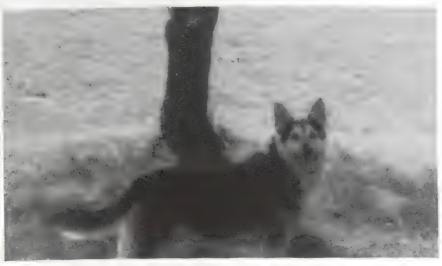
fast again, son?"

"Nah," Dad said. "I just took a little shortcut is all, Pop."

Grandma said, "Son, I wish you'd sell that Harley and that there little piece of trouble too," referring to the roadster.

"Oh Mom, come on. You only live once."

"No," she said. "Not you, Keith. You're working on number four about now." She was referring to his accident



Otis Martin

Argus would chew beer cans until his gums bled.

the year before, which had placed him in a neck brace for six months. I remembered how we got the call late one night. We were living in Pennsylvania, and Dad was visiting Grandma in West Virginia. Mom was pregnant with Sue at the time. We traveled for hours, Mom with her belly tight and large. We ended up staying at Grandma's for three months while Dad

Argus was a part of camp, too, roaming the campground searching for prey, which in his case happened to be beer cans.

lay up in the hospital. I guess that's what made him appear immortal to me. He kept surviving the most devastating injuries.

Granddad took Dad aside, expressing concern over his son's driving. I was waiting to see if Granddad would have one of his spells after he talked with Dad. But he didn't. He just picked up his fishing rod and tackle box and walked on toward the river. Fishing was Granddad's answer to life's problems.

I went fishing with my father only once, and it was in the summer of 1969.

Wayne was the bright spot in my father's life. Dad dealt with him as a father should deal with a son. For me, it was different. I was a girl, and he had a hard time knowing how to treat me. The time I went fishing with him was the only thing we ever did together that I recall.

We got our bait from Fischer's store. I always thought that was funny — even though it was spelled differently. It was a small store on Route 28 with a huge cement trough where thousands of tiny minnows (we called them "minnies") swam. I loved to sit on the edge of the trough and watch them frantically fighting to escape the net. I thought they were cute and really didn't want to use them as bait. I preferred American cheese — anything without eyes.

The fog moved smoothly over the surface of the river the night Granddad, Dad, Wayne, and I pushed the outboard away from the dock. The night noises — crickets, bullfrogs, and owls — blended with the soft ripples of water lapping against the boat. We kept our voices low as we glided downriver against the light of the moon.

Grandma used to tell us, "Don't drift too far down that river, or you'll end up in Paw Paw." She said it with such conviction that Paw Paw became the epitome of all that was wrong in the world. This nightmare hick town from *The Twilight Zone* used to plague my imagination. I could just imagine us drifting downriver somewhere near Main Street, Paw Paw, West Virginia — lost forever.

As we went downriver, Granddad maneuvered to avoid a piece of the old bridge that was left from one of the floods. Marked with a plastic milk container so boaters could avoid hitting it, this large bent arc of metal extended from a depth of about 15 feet to just three feet below the surface, depending on the water level. If my feet touched it when I drifted past, tubing or swimming, the bottom of my stomach would cave in, and chills would shiver up and down my body. I hated the unseen.

The nights were surreal. The moon's reflection off the surface of the river belied the water's darkness. They complemented one another. If I were to stand on the bridge and look down on the water, the moon's light cut a crooked path on the river's surface, leading all the way down to the last camp.

We finally reached the ripples and went past them to where the water once again became still. Two little islands jutted up from the surface, looking like matching ferrymen on rafts. Between the two islands was a near-stagnant pool that was home to thousands of larva, mostly tadpoles. They lost their tails and came onto shore in huge numbers. Whenever I would set my foot onto the white-pebbled shore, baby frogs jumped out of my way. The year before, I put a bunch of them in a metal recipe box to take

Otis Martin

Camp and proper motivation would inspire long-legged, knobby-kneed Grandma Aggie to dance on the picnic table at the adult parties in the evenings.

home, but I ended up forgetting them, and went home for a week. It was a hot summer, and when we returned the next weekend, I opened the lid to find a slew of little frog skeletons clinging desperately to their metal coffin. They had baked all week in the hot sun. I was a murderer. Granddad went gigging all the time for frogs, but it never seemed as horrible as what I had done.

As we drifted past Frog Island, a light mist developed, and I shivered a little. Dad took off his jacket and laid it on my shoulders.

I always had trouble casting. The rod seemed to go one way and my arm the other. I could never get them synchronized. Wayne thrust his line out onto the

dark marbled surface, and I tried to do the same, but my wrist wasn't quick enough. Dad put his hands on mine and rocked my wrist back and forth until the momentum grew and my line landed out close to the others.

Courtesy of Kelley Rae

The author's dad (back r), the youngest troubleshooter Sun Oil had ever had, was good at his job of fixing problems. He kept the family constantly moving from town to town as he went from job to job.

Wayne was a pro at all this and was catching one fish after the other. I had to put worm after worm on my hook because the sly fish would just bite around the hook. Secretly I was glad the fish weren't getting harpooned by my fishing hook. I wanted to use the cheese I had crammed in my pocket, but I knew these real fishermen wouldn't approve. I really

If I were to stand on the bridge and look down on the water, the moon's light cut a crooked path on the river's surface, leading all the way down to the last camp.

didn't want to hurt those minnows or worms, so I grazed the membrane lightly until it looked like it was attached. My line dangled straight in the water. I wanted it to dance around and come alive. I could forgive myself just once. I think I never would have felt the need to fish again if just once I could catch something better than Wayne could.

The mist turned into a light rain, and I was ready to leave, but I tried to be strong. I wanted to show my father I could catch one too, only my patience was waning. I started to get antsy and couldn't sit still. I made the boat move from side to side.

"Dad, could we please go back now? It's really starting to rain, and you know Mom won't want us catching our death," I said, thinking my attempt at parental logic would get me back to the camp without appearing weak.

"You didn't have to come, Sissy," he said.

"I know. I wanted to."

"You're a trooper."

"You really think so?"

"I know so. You may not be a good fisherman, but you can hit a mean baseball and jump higher than any boy I know." He put his arm on my shoulder, and I laid my head on his chest. Men didn't do much hugging in my family. I don't think they knew how. But when his arm went around me, I stopped feeling the rain. I stayed there all that night fishing with them. I didn't catch a thing.

I'd like to say the last time I saw my father, he was water-skiing, but it wasn't. I have chosen it as my last image of him, though, because it is such a majestic picture to carry in my mind.

We were up early the morning Wayne and I wanted to learn how to ski. Granddad did his best to explain the process to us in a way we could understand. I couldn't get my knees to straighten out, so I ended up skiing around the river in a squat, much to my embarrassment. I was relieved when it was Wayne's turn because he screwed up much worse than I had. He fell right off, but he didn't let go of the rope. He hung on while he was being pulled under the water. Granddad didn't notice at first until I waved my hands to let him know about Wayne's predicament. Wayne was waterlogged when he got onto the dock, water running from his ears and his nose.

Dad had been standing up on the bank observing the action. He was dressed in his suit for a meeting at work. He strode down onto the dock, kicked off his shoes, and slipped on the skis. Then he grabbed the rope and said, "Hit it, Pop." Off he went like he owned the damn river, which of course we assumed he did.

His movements were so graceful. There he was, in a three-piece, double-breasted suit, minus the wingtips, fighting the current behind the boat Granddad had rebuilt. His 200-pound, 6-foot form never revealed

Kelley Rae

Weekenders now make use of Blue Beach in their makeshift camps (1998).

Kelley Rae

The view from Blue Beach, 1998.

an inch of clumsiness. His silhouette against the tall cliffs was like a classical Greek sculpture. He didn't falter or, as I recall, blink an eye. Other skiers gave him the right-of-way as they called greetings to him. "Hey, you son-of-a-bitch. What'll you think of next?" Or "What a way to mix business with pleasure!"

He made his circle around the river, and as he came in near the dock, he beached the skis and slipped his feet out of them, one at a time, and then placed the skis onto the dock. He managed all this

I'd like to say that the last time I saw my father, he was water-skiing, but it wasn't. I have chosen it as my last image of him, though, because it is such a majestic picture to carry in my mind.

while wetting only the bottoms of his pants. He said, "Now do it like that," as he got on his motorcycle, tousled Wayne's hair, and left for work. Mom never got to see it. She was busy chasing after Sue.

She always missed the good stuff.

Dad died a few weeks after the Fourth of July. He developed a kink in his intestines. It was an enigma to us all, such a young man falling ill and dying within a week. The doctors removed 27 feet of intestines, but Dad contracted gangrene and then died of shock. He was only 30 years old.

The summer of 1969 was the beginning of the end. Grandma was grief-stricken; she never recovered. Dad wasn't supposed to have anything to drink after the surgery, but Grandma always gave Dad whatever he asked for. As he went deeper and deeper into shock, he got thirstier and thirstier. He kept asking for water the night he died, and Mom thinks it was the water that killed him.

When my mother remarried, we moved over the state line to Maryland. I was 14. It seemed as though the most important people in my life had just vanished off the face of the earth. I felt abandoned, bereft of the childhood innocence I would never again find.

And I tried. When I was 16, my boyfriend and I hitchhiked to camp. We stopped to see Granddad on the way. He was excited to see me and told me about what he wanted to do with a few of his belongings in the event of his death. It was as if he knew. My boyfriend and I went on down to camp with our backpacks and provisions. The rains had once again flooded the area, and the camp was filled with mud. It took us two days to scrub the gray residue from the walls and floor. We removed most of the water-damaged furniture, pulling it out onto the grass to dry. It was early spring, so no one else had ventured into the sogginess. I have never cleaned so religiously. The dry caked-on mud was like the skin of death covering the entire place.

Not long after, Granddad died from a massive coronary. He was sighting his rifle, sitting at his sister's kitchen table. In resignation, he calmly pulled his limp arm up onto the table with the one that was still working. They say he was dead before he hit the floor. When my grandfather died, my uncle was the only one left. But he came up from Baltimore and sold camp.

Since that time in my life, the area has once again been drastically flooded. Sometimes I imagine camp swirling in a tornado of water. Now no camps remain on Blue Beach. However, I am told that some people do weekend camping there in tents, lean-tos, and campers.

To this day, no one has rebuilt any camps. N&T

Kelley Rae, who holds a master's degree in creative writing from North Carolina State University, is executive director of Carolina Wren Press in Durham, N.C. She writes creative nonfiction and has been in residency at Weymouth Center for the Arts and Humanities and at Wildacres, an artists' retreat in Little Switzerland, N.C. Her essay, "Our Bars," appeared in the summer 2000 Appalachian Lives issue of Now & Then. *Both "Our Bars" and "Blue Beach" are excerpts from her thesis.*

Dowsing

Cut a forked branch.
Strip it clean of bark,

and hold fast.

Seeking water,
it leads you to places

you've never been.

The unseen
pulls like a ten-pound trout

bending your branch earthward,

reeling in
the hidden spring.

—Laura Treacy Bentley

Laura Treacy Bentley's poetry collection, Elemental, *won second place at the West Virginia Writers state competition in 1998. She has had work published in many journals and in four anthologies. Her poetry collection* Untangling *will be published in late 2002 or early 2003 by Salmon Publishing in Ireland. She lives and teaches in Huntington, W.Va.*

Rivers of Steel

by Christine M. Goldbeck

A Southwest Pennsylvania Heritage Area turns the legacy of steel into a tool for economic recovery and growth.

The Rivers of Steel National and State Heritage Area has no established single admissions gate, and a day in this tourist attraction would not be nearly enough to take in all the rides, shows, and food that this park, of sorts, offers. This is because Rivers of Steel is more than simply a place to visit.

Rivers of Steel conserves and interprets historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources connected with steel and its associated industries. But more than that, the heritage area is a way for Appalachian Pennsylvania communities to recover from the economic, social, and environmental fallout of the sudden collapse of the steel industry during the 1970s and 1980s.

An Emerging Network

Steel, along with coal and other related industries, had provided many residents in this part of Appalachian Pennsylvania with their livelihood for more than a century. During the period Southwestern Pennsylvania could boast it was the "Steel-Making Capital of the World," the steel that workers produced was used in everything from the Brooklyn Bridge to World II battleships. The demise of steel — caused by a shift in the U.S. from a manufacturing to a service-based economy — resulted in the loss of 100,000 steel and steel-related jobs between 1978 and 1983.

Social and cultural chaos ensued. The landscape of the region's many river valleys is dotted by abandoned and contaminated industrial sites, called "brownfields," located in devastated mill and mining communities. While the Pittsburgh area is currently in the process of transforming itself into a technology and service-based economy, there is still much work to be done, especially in outlying rural areas.

Southwest Pennsylvania's days as one of the centers of the American Industrial Revolution are now clearly history. But that very industrial history, packaged properly, can make for the cultural preservation and community economic development so needed in the area. Signs of these once flourishing industries — steel, especially — in the river valleys in and around Pittsburgh remain in the area's people, places, and natural resources. The way Southwestern Pennsylvanians speak, the foods they eat, the churches they attend, and the cultural pastimes in which they engage are not only worth preserving for their own sake, they are also marketable commodities in the tourism business. It was this realization that gave birth back in the late 1980s to the undertaking that has culminated in the establishment of the Rivers

Courtesy of the Rivers of Steel Archives

The shutting down of Pennsylvania's steel mills, such as U.S. Steel's 35-acre Carrie Furnaces complex, resulted in the loss of 100,000 steel-related jobs between 1978 and 1983.

of Steel National and State Heritage Area, one of nine formally designated heritage areas in Pennsylvania.

Mapping Out a Strategy

It is not easy mapping out a strategy for a heritage area. It took seven years of planning to get the Rivers of Steel Heritage Area up and running. From bringing people of diverse backgrounds and ideas together to submitting grant applications, it was, as one authority said, an intense labor of love.

What resulted from all that planning was Rivers of Steel, a public-private partnership coordinated by the nonprofit Steel Industry Heritage Corp. (SIHC). The Heritage Area is an emerging network of industrial and cultural sites radiating out from Pittsburgh along the river valleys of the Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio, and Youghiogheny. But perhaps even more importantly, Rivers of Steel is a process involving more than 500 communities in seven Southwestern Pennsylvania counties covering approximately 2,000 square miles. Government, businesses, local cultural and educational organizations, and individuals have come together to forge coalitions in an area that historically has been splintered along ethnic and racial lines.

At the state level, Rivers of Steel participates in the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program (PHPP). The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) administers this program in conjunction with the State Heritage Parks Interagency Task Force. The task force, in turn, involves the state departments of Community and Economic Development, Education, and Transportation; the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; and the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission. Each of these agencies provides grant funding for heritage area projects, with the state legislature appropriating funding in the annual budget.

PHPP funds, awarded on a competitive application basis, pay for administrative costs, such as salaries and benefits; for studies involved in planning and growing a heritage region; and for bricks-and-mortar implementation projects. Studies and planning projects require a 25 percent match from the local heritage area planning group; implementation projects call for a 50 percent match. "Getting plans and specs done is where our money is very valuable. Basically our money is used to leverage millions of dollars," explains Tim Keptner, chief of DCNR's regional services division.

On the federal level, due to its congressional designation in 1996 as a national heritage area, Rivers of Steel is authorized to receive an annual appropriation of up to $1 million a year for 10 years. This appropriation is coordinated through the U.S. Interior Department's National Park Service.

Heritage as Catalyst

One reason developing a strategy for Rivers of Steel was so challenging was that a willingness to work with nearby communities was key. Although that may sound trite, consider the natural architecture of Appalachia, with its forested mountains and rolling rivers.

That terrain gave birth to communities that, while certainly tied to the national economy, remained relatively self-sufficient. Townsfolk were able to fend for themselves because the mill, the mine, and the factory, churches, schools, and support operations, such as the general store, were all within walking distance. People in one town often had healthy rivalries with neighboring communities, rivalries that continue today in the form of intense competition between high school football teams. Of course, it was generally in industry's best interests to foster such self-contained communities and to encourage divisions between different ethnic and racial groups, thus minimizing the odds of workers coming together to organize.

Courtesy of the Rivers of Steel Archives

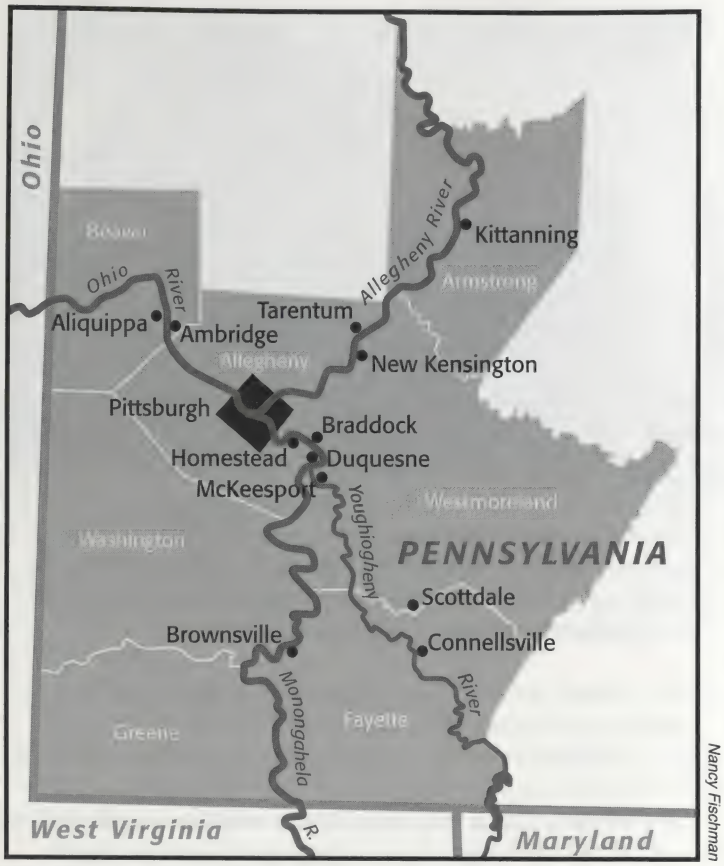
The preservation of the Bost Building in Homestead, Pa., is an early Rivers of Steel project. The union and press headquarters from the bloody 1892 Homestead Strike will eventually become the main Rivers of Steel visitors center and Steel Industry Heritage Corp. headquarters.

"Planning a heritage area is really about trying to get communities that have never worked together to sit down at the table and plan out a strategy," observes August R. Carlino, SIHC president and CEO.

In 1988, people interested in the history of steel formed the Steel Industry Heritage Task Force to explore how best to preserve and interpret that history. In 1991, the task force became the nonprofit SIHC. Today the SIHC has a staff of 10, augmented by consultants and overseen by a board of corporate and labor union executives, university personnel, government officials, and other powerbrokers.

From 1990 to 1993, this planning process involved hundreds of people: Townsfolk, municipal officials, entrepreneurs, and university students participated in the state and federally mandated planning studies. Although it was not always easy, it worked, Carlino says. Those studies concluded that the region did have the resources, public and private support, capacity for intergovernmental cooperation, and local commitment and leadership necessary to maintain and interpret a heritage area.

In the beginning, only one local government body, Allegheny County, was involved with Rivers of Steel. Some local governments expressed skepticism about the heritage project because of their long-held distrust of Pittsburgh-based undertakings. Essentially, as in other regions throughout the nation, the smaller political subdivisions sometimes feel as if their urban counterparts have more opportunities than they do. When that happened, however, local citizens in the outlying counties lobbied their officials, pressing them to get involved. As a result, Rivers of Steel now encompasses Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties in addition to Allegheny.



Nancy Fischman

The Rivers of Steel Heritage Area encompasses Pittsburgh and seven counties in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

"Common heritage becomes a catalyst for regional planning," says Keptner. "It brings down the barriers because everybody becomes a stakeholder. Heritage areas are model examples of regional planning, of the process of bringing many municipalities and people together."

Regional Journey Areas

In 1993, the SIHC began work on the Rivers of Steel Management Action Plan, released in 1996. The plan outlines a set of related strategies aimed at preserving, conserving, and promoting Southwestern Pennsylvania's historic and cultural resources; interpreting its industrial history; creating educational programs and curriculums; and developing natural and recreational resources. All of these efforts are intended to foster economic and community development.

The plan recommended that the seven-county heritage area be divided into five subregions, called "regional journeys," for easier management and interpretation. The core subregion, the Big Steel Journey, includes the city of Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Steel Co. (later U.S. Steel Corp.) mill towns extending along the Monongahela River to McKeesport, Pa.

Two subregions are located to the south and east of the city: Fueling a Revolution, and Mountains of Fire. Fueling a Revolution focuses on Brownsville, Pa. Brownsville was a transportation hub for the steel industry due to its strategic position at the junction of the Monongahela River and the National Road — the 19th century road that was the country's first federally funded highway and is now U.S. Route 40. The town also prospered as a commercial center for the nearby coal and coke district, which powered the Pittsburgh area's fiery steel mills. Like Fueling a Revolution, the Mountains of Fire area has connections to the coal and coke industry. Running along the Youghiogheny and concentrating on Scottdale and Connellsville, Pa., this journey is located in the district that produced the high quality bituminous coal that was processed into coke.

The remaining two subregions, located north and west of Pittsburgh, are Thunder of Protest, which follows the Ohio and Beaver rivers through Beaver County, and the Mosaic of Industry area, which focuses on Kittanning, Pa., and runs along the Allegheny and Kiskiminetas rivers through upper Allegheny, Westmoreland, and Armstrong counties. Thunder of Protest presents the story of union organizing efforts in the 1930s, while the Mosaic of Industry area concentrates on midsize and specialty steel mills, fabrication plants, machine shops, and foundries. In addition, the Mosaic journey features sites and communities connected with steel-related industries, such as aluminum, glass, and electricity.

A Forgotten Landmark

An example of an early Rivers of Steel project was the preservation of the Bost Building in Homestead, Pa. The building served as union and press headquarters during the pivotal Homestead Strike of 1892, one of the most violent in labor history. The Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers had struck against the Carnegie Steel Co. after negotiations over a proposed wage cut failed. Violence peaked on July 6 when strikers and Pinkerton detectives engaged in a 14-hour battle that left 10 dead. The workers were ultimately defeated; the strike broke the union nationwide and set the effort to unionize the steel industry back more than 40 years.

Nearly 100 years later, the three-story Homestead building stood abandoned and crumbling, its role in history forgotten. Then in 1987, journalist and historic preservationist Randy Harris came across illustrations included in an 1892 *Harper's Weekly* article about the strike. He immediately made the connection between the decrepit Homestead structure and the building identified in the magazine as the union and press headquarters during the strike.

Once the SIHC acquired the historically significant site for $2,000, plus $40,000 in back taxes, the corporation embarked on a $4.3 million historic preservation project. Work on the actual restoration began in 1998 and is scheduled to be completed in 2002. In addition to housing SIHC's offices and growing archives, the Bost Building will function as the main Rivers of Steel visitors center. It will also include exhibits that tell the story of the Pittsburgh area's role in steelmaking as well as a recreation of the strike headquarters on the top floor.

Touring Big Steel

By the late 1990s, it became clear there was a growing demand for systematic tours. The SIHC staff decided to pilot tours within the Big Steel core journey area. That way, they reasoned, SIHC staff and participating communities could apply the lessons learned in developing bus, riverboat, and walking tours in the Big Steel area before undertaking similar projects in the other four subregions. With four tours currently available in Big

Steel, the SIHC staff will soon begin assisting the Thunder of Protest and Mosaic of Industry journey areas in the development of their own action plans for similar programs.

Rivers of Steel inaugurated the first of the tours, an overview of the Big Steel Journey, in 1999. It is a four-hour bus trip that begins in downtown Pittsburgh, travels out through the Carnegie mill towns along the Monongahela, and then circles back to the city. The bus winds its way through neighborhood streets past turn-of-the-20th century architecture and slag dumps; by the first public library steel magnate Andrew Carnegie ever endowed; by Kennywood Park, a classic amusement park; and past countless ethnic churches. Highlights include stops at U.S. Steel's Edgar Thomson Works, one of the few mills still in operation in the area. Tourists also get a chance to view from across the river the now idle 35-acre Carrie Furnaces complex, part of the proposed Homestead Works National Park site.

In addition to the overview bus tour, Rivers of Steel now offers a two-hour boat tour that, like its overland counterpart, travels out from Pittsburgh but views the Carnegie mill towns from the water. There are also two programs, entitled "Classroom-on-Wheels," aimed at middle and high school students. These include pre- and post-tour curriculum components.

There are plans to expand the school tours and to design community walking tours. SIHC staff are also beginning work on a folklife heritage trails guidebook. It is anticipated that it will be modeled on *The Craft Heritage Trails of Western North Carolina*, published by the Asheville, N.C.-based organization HandMade in America for the Western North Carolina National Craft Heritage Corridor. With a similar guidebook in hand, people touring Rivers of Steel could search out an artisan's craft shop on their own or find their way to Connellsville's monthly old-time fiddlers' jamboree.

Courtesy of the Rivers of Steel Archives

School children on the Big Steel Journey bus tour stop in Braddock to view U.S. Steel's Edgar Thomson Works, one of the few operating mills in the area.

Going to the Experts

According to Doris J. Dyen, SIHC's director of cultural conservation for Rivers of Steel, each tour incorporates specific themes and discussions of environmental, economic, and cultural

What advice does Rivers of Steel Heritage area executive director August R. Carlino have for other Appalachian municipalities contemplating establishing their own heritage regions?

Rivers of Steel is using the legacy of the American Industrial Revolution to rebuild the mine and mill communities of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Carlino sums up the three main lessons he's learned after 11 years on job: Municipalities must build strong partnerships with their state government and with neighboring communities, ensure that their purpose is rooted in economic development, and think of themselves as a business seeking investment partners.

"The most successful heritage areas are the ones that have state programs, the ones where state government understands the role that heritage development plays in economic redevelopment. At the outset, Pennsylvania modeled its heritage area program after programs in Massachusetts and New York, but Pennsylvania went even further than those states. For example, we have a very comprehensive state heritage area designation process, which includes detailed guidelines for planning. In addition, there is $2.75 million in state funds earmarked annually for heritage areas. Both Rivers of Steel and the state of Pennsylvania are now the model for other areas wanting to get heritage areas up and running," Carlino says, talking about the way Rivers of Steel collaborated with the state.

Focusing on the importance of community involvement, he adds that the strongest heritage areas also have strong community constituencies. "Because ultimately, you run the risk of a strong bureaucracy overpowering the desires of the local community," Carlino explains. "That can be balanced when you have a community constituency focused on what it wants to do in its own area and that asks the state government to partner with it."

Other ingredients for a successful heritage area—specifically, a clearly defined purpose rooted in economic development—build on the grassroots component. "You have to make sure that your goals are going to be projects that ultimately benefit the community, something they can point to. I don't necessarily mean bricks and mortar. It could be an educational program where the purpose is to enlighten the businesses about what the community has to offer."

For example, developers in the Rivers of Steel region have learned that a mix of heritage education and physical improvement is successful in marketing former industrial facilities. Former mill and mine workers offer educational tours of the facilities. To provide contemporary amenities at these old factories, heritage developers add trails and signage to the property.

Finally, if heritage area organizers do not consider their project a business, they will struggle for funding. "Organizers must be entrepreneurial. They must develop a business plan and devise a strategy for how their heritage area will work. Otherwise, they risk appearing as poor nonprofit agencies begging for money when the message they really want to convey is that they are seeking investment partners. You have to show there is a return investment," Carlino concludes.

—CMG

Courtesy of the Rivers of Steel Archives

Kittanning's Riverfront Park on the Allegheny is an example of the 11 riverfront landings planned by Rivers of Steel.

issues relating to the steel communities' past history and current economic recovery efforts. SIHC staff identifies issues and develops the tour's themes by going directly to the experts themselves: the citizens of the mill towns. "The way we're developing these tours is to work right with people from the communities. Each time we've done a new tour," Dyen explains, "we've pulled in people from the communities and then recorded all of the meetings. We've had community people essentially think out what issues need to be addressed." Once the tours are up and running, residents continue to play a central role. "Since the whole point is to benefit the communities," says Dyen, "all Rivers of Steel tour guides either have to be from the communities or have a strong connection to the industrial towns."

On the way out to the Braddock Lock on the boat tour, guides discuss the Monongahela's role as a transportation artery for the steel industry. On the way back downriver to Pittsburgh, they talk about the river as a place that's being restored to public access and reclaimed environmentally. To date, Rivers of Steel has raised $3.2 million for the planning of 11 river landings, such as the one at Kittanning along the Allegheny.

Some of the Rivers of Steel customized tours stop for lunch at the Bulgarian-Macedonian National Educational and Cultural Center in West Homestead, Pa. There participants are not only treated to authentic Bulgarian cooking, but they also hear firsthand accounts of that particular group's efforts to conserve its culture and traditions. "The tour program has become a concrete way of pulling together the many different types of activities the heritage area encompasses," Dyen says.

Investing in Communities

Rivers of Steel hopes to use thematic tours to reach an audience that includes both visitors from outside the area and neighbors from Southwestern Pennsylvania. "The tours make it possible for communities in journey areas to explain themselves to outsiders," says Dyen. "They bring in visitors and money and let outsiders see and experience the fact that these communities are still viable. But we also hope to convince people from other more affluent parts of the Pittsburgh area to stop bypassing these industrial towns, to take a look at their revitalization efforts, and to give some thought to the legacy of steel."

The heritage tourism component of Rivers of Steel certainly helps it realize its mandate to foster economic development. Pennsylvania's heritage tourism is making a significant contribution to the state's economy in general. The state's DCNR statistics show that heritage tourism currently maintains more than 69,000 jobs, representing $1.34 billion in wages and salaries and generating $617 million in taxes. A study released last year and covering 1997 revealed that heritage travel within Pennsylvania accounted for 25 percent of all leisure travel spending and 12 percent of all leisure travel visits.

Carlino says Rivers of Steel is projected to attract 840,000 visitors a year and generate about $60 million annually through retail outlets such as craft shops, museums, marinas, bookstores, and bed and breakfast establishments. Planners expect that tourism-related employment will generate more than 1,100 jobs, representing a gross annual payroll of about $16 million.

While quantifying the tourist influx into any of Pennsylvania's heritage areas is important, it is not the primary concern. Rather, the most meaningful measure of success is how many of an area's residents and businesses remain and grow and whether new businesses set up shop in a heritage area. Says Carlino, "Investments we generate back into the community: That's where numbers count."

A Quality Place

DCNR's Keptner adds, "The quality of life, the investments in the cultural history of these heritage areas make these special places. I've had telephone calls from a placement agency for physicians. Those phone calls make it clear that preservation and progress in an area does attract professionals because it says that this region will continue to grow."

Carlino notes that companies with whom he has spoken about establishing an operation in the Rivers of Steel region look for available work force, for existing structures such as factories or warehouses and for cultural and recreational opportunities. "Let's face it. No matter how much history a place has, no one is going to come if it's not a pretty place. Heritage tourism is about creating a quality place for residents and visitors so that counties can market it. If business is looking to locate somewhere, where are they going to go? They'll go where there is an increased level of activity and a sense of quality of place."

Other states in the Appalachian region — including Ohio and the Carolinas — have heritage tourism projects. Although each program is unique in many ways, all have a common foundation. They exist to enhance the understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage and to use the history of an area as a growth tool.

The Rivers of Steel process continues. "A heritage area is ever-growing and ongoing," says Carlino. "It's a constant, constant process at different levels, and it takes a long, long time. I'm convinced that the commitment we have from the people involved in the communities that make this happen is the reason for our success. We now have levels of trust and confidence. We have a whole network to work together for the good of an entire region." N&T

Christine M. Goldbeck is an award-winning poet, journalist, and fiction writer. Her collection of short stories, A Tribute to O'Hara and Other Stories, *is available through minecountry.com and Amazon.com. She lives and writes in Shenandoah, Pa.*

A Flood of Mighty Waters

by Tamara Baxter

Mama says if the rain doesn't stop soon, we will all be washed down the Nolichucky River. Our little house that sits upon Stone Shoe Island will come loose from its moorings and float down the river like a houseboat.

Will our house float like Noah's Ark, and will we wave at people who live along the river? I say.

No, Mama says. *We will float a ways, likely, but not too far, and we will spin like a top in the flood, and then we will sink.*

I spin myself around and around and fall dizzy-headed on the floor.

Do you know how to swim?

Mama shakes her head. *No, son. I don't know how to swim.*

Mama says the river has risen four feet in one day, more than any day before. She has measured only two feet of space between the river and our house with her yardstick. The Nolichucky River must be one hundred feet deep now — maybe more. Mr. Fat Doty's tobacco barn is underwater. The river has grown a mile wide, and all the houses and barns along the river are underwater, all but our house that sits upon Stone Shoe Island. Mama says Stone Shoe Island is called Stone Shoe because it is shaped like a woman's boot, but Daddy says our island is more like a giant granite tooth sticking out of the river, and why anybody would live on top of this place is a wonder to him. My daddy is Farless Woods, and he works for Fat Doty, who owns this house and a river-bottom farm of many acres. My mama is Ester Woods, and my name is Karo because I like to eat syrup.

Mama likes living atop Stone Shoe Island because we are like birds high in a nest. We can see to Knoxville on a clear day. We can look over the tops of the highest trees to land way beyond the edge of Fat Doty's farm and see the brown roads crawling in and out of the trees. We can look below and see the brown river splitting around us. But now the flood has come up to our door, and the river is swallowing us. Mama says if we wash away in the flood, it will be her fault for enjoying the earthly pleasure of such a view.

Who could have known such a tide as this would come? Mama says. *We haven't had a flood since the power dam was built. We should have gone days ago, before the boat washed away.*

Daddy is not afraid of the flood. He sits at the kitchen table drinking his magic water and eating a can of sardines. Daddy cuts the top off the can with his pocketknife the way he learned to do in the Army. The teensy fish smell rotten and float in ketchup that does not taste right. He spears the fish with his pocketknife and eats them off the blade. And then he drinks some more of his magic water out of the jar. I do not like the rotten-smelling fish.

> The river has grown a mile wide, and all the houses and barns along the river are underwater, all but our house that sits upon Stone Shoe Island.

Daddy says that when I grow up and go to the great war, I will learn to eat many rotten-smelling things because I will starve to death if I do not learn to eat whatever I can get my hands on — even rotten beef, if necessary. That is because there will be war and killing and rain, rain, rain.

You are scaring the boy, Mama says. *Always scaring him with war talk.*

Daddy pokes the tip of his knife at my chin. This rain is nothing like the rain he remembers in the Italian campaign. This rain is puny. What are we complaining about, Daddy says. He

has eaten his sardines in rainwater that was higher than his boot tops. *Look,* he says, pointing his knife toward the floorboards. *Look. We're still dry here.* Wait until the water gets above our knees. Then we will all know what the rain of war is like.

Mama says that Daddy likes to get drunk and feel sorry for himself because he had to go to the Army and fight in World War II. Now he is sorry that he had to come home and be like ordinary people and farm the land and take care of a wife and son.

Daddy pokes the tip of his knife at my chin. This rain is nothing like the rain he remembers in the Italian campaign. This rain is puny. What are we complaining about, Daddy says.

Daddy drinks the last of his magic water and tosses the empty jar out the open door, where the river is going fast in bumpy waves. He points his knife at me again. He says I must wait until the water gets up to my knees and my feet are so wet and cold I can not feel them. Then I will know about rain. *You think this river mud stinks? Wait till you smell dead men rotting under the water.*

Daddy says that when I get to be a man and go to Italy like he did and I am in the rain of the war, I will see parts of dead men sticking up out of the water. I will be glad to see boots and elbows because I will not want to step on a dead man. I will be glad their faces are under the water because the dead men might be my buddies — or my enemies. But the rotten smell will be everywhere, so I will not be sure of where to walk. I will hunker down in the rain, cut open my sardines, and eat them anyway because I will be tired and starving.

You always bully the boy when you get drunk, Mama says.

Daddy says, *The boy is nine years old, and he's still a sissy. The day will come when he must act like a man.*

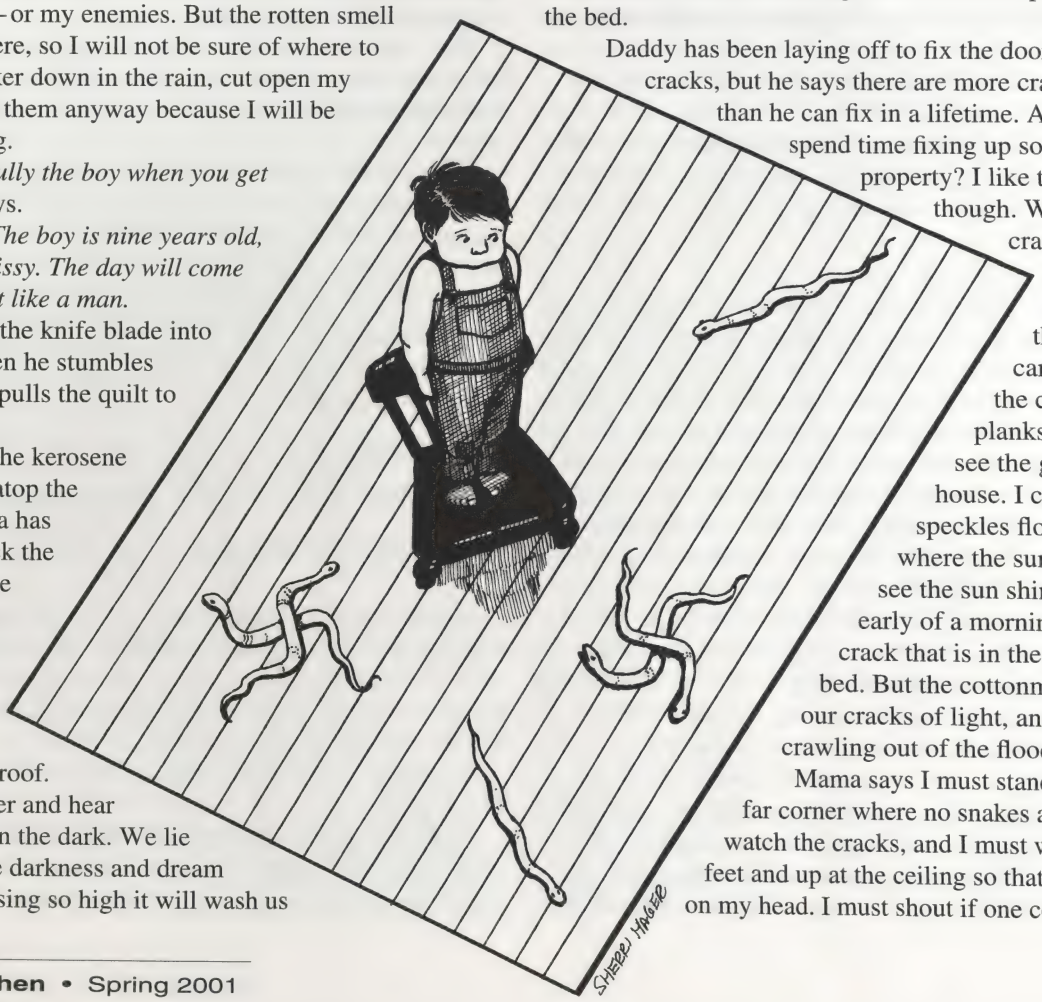
Daddy sticks the knife blade into the tabletop. Then he stumbles back to bed and pulls the quilt to his chin.

Mama lights the kerosene lamp and sets it atop the cookstove. Mama has been holding back the kerosene for three days of the flood while we sit through the nights and listen to the rain pounding on the roof. We smell the river and hear the water rising in the dark. We lie in our beds in the darkness and dream about the river rising so high it will wash us away in our sleep. Mama holds the lamp toward the calendar and draws an X on the ninth day of rain to come unending. *If the rain keeps coming this hard, we will not make it past tomorrow,* she says. *There will be no need to draw another mark upon the calendar. There will be no need to save the kerosene.*

Mama says the brown snake that crawls through a crack in the floorboards is a water snake. The snake wraps around Mama's hands. She plops him back into the river. But the snake that falls upon the kitchen table from out of the rafters is a cottonmouth moccasin, and that heavy snake thumps the table. He curls himself into a spring and jumps at me like a jack-in-the-box. Mama jerks me away before his white mouth comes at my face. I can see inside his cotton throat.

Mama says this snake is agitated by the flood, and he is seeking a dry spot. Mama takes her hoe from the corner behind the stove and chops at the snake. He is strong and willful. He jumps off the table at Mama's skirt and hisses. Mama chops off his tail, and he squirms like a fishing worm and ties himself into a knot. Mama chops the snake into pieces while it squirms itself into a bloody mess on our kitchen floor. Mama says, *Thank God the lamp is burning now. We could never see in the dark to kill that snake.*

But then another cottonmouth crawls in the door, and another one falls out of the rafters atop the stove and lands beside the kerosene lamp. And then another snake crawls through a crack in the ceiling and hangs down like a rope before it falls on the bed.



Daddy has been laying off to fix the door and jam up the cracks, but he says there are more cracks in our house than he can fix in a lifetime. And why should he spend time fixing up somebody else's property? I like the cracks, though. We have wide cracks around the ceiling where the roof doesn't join the house right. I can put my eyes to the cracks between the planks in the floor and see the ground under the house. I can see dust speckles floating in the air where the sun comes in. I can see the sun shining into the house early of a morning through one big crack that is in the corner over my bed. But the cottonmouths have found our cracks of light, and they are crawling out of the flood.

Mama says I must stand on a chair in the far corner where no snakes are crawling. I must watch the cracks, and I must watch under my feet and up at the ceiling so that snakes do not fall on my head. I must shout if one comes near. Mama

chops at the snakes with her hoe. Some curl up and strike, and some crawl fast across the floor. I cannot watch them all at once.

Mama catches a bucket of rainwater out the window and throws it across Daddy's face. *Get out of your drunken stupor,* Mama says. *Cottonmouths are crawling all over the place.*

Daddy pulls himself off the bed and hitches his pants. He counts more than a dozen snakes, with his finger bobbing like a willow limb. The cottonmouth beside the lamp is still because it is warm and dry. That snake thinks he is lying in the sun, so he has gone to sleep beside the lamp. I have seen snakes sunning

> He walks me over to the sleeping snake lying on the stove, and we put the gun beside its head, and I am scared to death.

beside the river when I am sailing my boats, and they take no notice of me playing. But these snakes are crawling out of the flood and darkness. They are troubled.

Daddy tromps over the snakes. He takes down his gun box from the shelf where he keeps the Luger that he took off a dead German. The German was sleeping in a trench when Daddy shot him. Daddy could not find his buddies in the Battle of the Bulge. There was snow on the ground deeper than the snow of Sluder's Gap in the winter. Daddy and his buddies got whooped all to hell that day. I am not to say the *hell* word out loud, but I say it inside my head because I cannot stop it. The snow of the Bulge was after the rains of Italy.

It was dark and past suppertime. Daddy did not have a bit of grub so he crawled through the snow to the Germans because he could smell stew cooking. The Germans cozied around the fire and warmed their feet by the flames. Another one passed the plates, and one fat German poured some drinks from a jar. Daddy left his gun in the snow. The gun barrel had frozen to his hands, and the skin of his fingers peeled off on his gun. He stole the sleeping German's Luger and shot him in the ear. Then he shot all the other Germans before they could get their guns pointed. My daddy sat down among the dead soldiers and drank their whiskey and ate their stew. Daddy took their guns and food. He got saved by killing the Germans.

I'm going to show you how to shoot a German Luger, boy. It's time you learned something, Daddy says. *We're going to kill some snakes. Think they own the damned place.*

Daddy aims at one snake near the bed, and the floor splinters up. Then Daddy shoots the snake on the table, and it pops up in the air.

Why is that boy crying? he says to Mama. Daddy stomps through the snakes, and them striking his boots. Daddy tucks me under his arm and puts the gun in my hand. The gun is heavy and smells like an oil lamp. He puts his big hand over mine and points the gun. I must kill snakes, he says.

Lookie at that big one trying to crawl under the bed. Daddy slides his boot under the bed and kicks the snake out in the floor. It balls up. *Shoot that sumabitch right in the head, boy.* I pull the trigger under Daddy's finger, and the snake comes apart, and the river gurgles up through the floorboards.

Hell, let's blow away that bastard trying to come in the door. I feel the trigger go twice.

Shoot that sumabitch on the stove. Daddy points my hand toward the snake curled up beside the light.

Dear God. Watch out for the lamp, Mama screams. She stands on the chair in the corner with the hoe raised like a flag.

Shoot this one in the ear, boy, Daddy says. He walks me over to the sleeping snake lying on the stove, and we put the gun beside its head, and I am scared to death because my hand is right close to the snake's head, and we shoot that snake in his ear, and its head flies away, but its body stays still.

Sumabitch didn't know what hit him, Daddy laughs.

My hand burns on the gun. I slip loose from Daddy and run to the chair where my mama stands with her hoe reached out.

Well, boy. That's how you shoot them damned Germans. Right in the ear, Daddy says. He waves his gun in the air and stumbles over the dead snakes and stumbles to his gun box and tries to put the gun in his box, but it falls on the floor, and then my daddy tries to pick up the gun, but he stumbles backwards out the door and washes away in the flood.

This is how Billy Feathers and Giant Joe Jenkins get me and Mama out of the flood. Billy comes downriver on a barge and bumps into our house in the early light. My mama is crying and praying and thanking God that the rain has finally stopped pounding on the roof. Everything is still and quiet, except the river gurgling and the house creaking and moaning and the snakes hissing and my mama praying, *Please God help us. Please God help us.* And we are standing on chairs in the corner while the river comes running through the cracks, and by the middle of the night, the water comes up to my feet, and by morning, it is up to my waist. Mama says we must not think about the water swirling around our legs and our feet freezing. We must think about keeping the snakes away.

Mama puts the kerosene lamp in my hands and says I must hold the lamp above the water and not drop it. I have the light of the whole world in my hands. Mama holds the hoe. The snakes

> Mama put the kerosene lamp in my hands and said I must hold the lamp above the water and not drop it. I have the light of the whole world in my hands.

are swimming in the water and climbing up the walls and falling from the rafters into the water. Every time a snake swims toward us, Mama knocks it away with her hoe. I must save us by holding the lamp so Mama can see to knock the snakes away. But the lamp gets very heavy, and my arms hurt bad. Mama tells me I must bear the burden. I must hold fast and pray God will help me hold the lamp.

This is the light that Billy Feathers says he could not figure out. Why is that light shining on Stone Shoe Island after it being dark there for days except that they still be inside? Billy Feather's barge hits the corner of our house, and the wall tilts

in. He shines a flashlight through the kitchen window. Mama says, *We're over here. Watch. Snakes everywhere.* First, Billy Feathers and then Giant Joe Jenkins come through the windows. They wear waist-high wading boots and knock the snakes away with a stick. Giant Joe Jenkins carries my mama, and Billy Feathers carries me. *Where is your daddy?* says Giant Joe Jenkins. *He fell into the flood,* I say.

Billy says we've got to get out now. The house is going to wash away any minute. Mama and me get threaded through the window, and there is Billy Feather's barge swinging and bumping against the house. Billy tells us to lie flat and hold to a rope so that we will not bump off in the rapid waves. We bounce down the river. The sun is coming up good, but the water is so wide across the earth that I can not figure anything out. Billy Feathers says that Fat Doty's tobacco patch is deep under the river. That is when Mama lets out a screech and points toward some treetops just sticking out of the water. The limbs are stripped of their leaves. We can see Daddy caught in the forks of a tree, caught at the waist between two limbs. Daddy lifts his head a little and moves his arm. Mama says, *Oh my God, Farless.* Mama shouts to Daddy and waves her arm. Billy Feathers says, *I'll be durned.*

We hear a loud screeching behind us and look back in time to see our house sliding down the side of Stone Shoe Island into the river. Our house doesn't float or spin at all. It gurgles and groans, and then it sinks under the muddy water. N&T

An associate professor of English at Northeast State Technical Community College in Blountville, Tenn., Tamara Baxter has been writing fiction for more than 20 years. Her short fiction has appeared in several journals, including Appalachian Heritage, Artemis, *and* Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel, *as well as in anthologies, including* The Nightshade Nightstand Reader, A Gathering at the Forks, *and* O. Henry Festival 2000 Stories. *This story is adapted from the first chapter of an as yet unpublished novel, "The Promise of the Father."*

Jack R. Woodside Jr.

Goshen Pass: Among the Fallen

Water here is anything but metaphysical
Driven by gravity too profound for the theologian
Here sprinting, there spinning
To swirl among
The fallen stone children of the cliffs

I was nearly swept away once
Just above where we sit on this rock
She and I were swimming on a warm spring day
Just out of the dark main current
Secure until gravity caught us, too
And only the blind instinct to survive rose to my aid
I grasped the last possible rock
And she held me, pulled herself from the grip of water

I can't recall the feel of her panic-strengthened hands
Or the power of the river as it wore me down
But the sound has stayed with me all these years
I heard it through my flesh
Whipped like a flag by the stream

Even the low water today
Placid and distant as our discouraged eyes
Emptied by the thought of waiting
Recalls a test passed, life saved
The hand of a real God

With such recollection
Who can blame me for looking ahead in faith
Following life's pull
Over the random stones of time

— Cy Dillon

A native of the Virginia mountain region, Cy Dillon is a librarian at Ferrum College in Ferrum, Va. Dillon's interests include subsistence farming, fishing, hiking, and volunteer work at Ferrum's Blue Ridge Institute. Recent publications include poems in Savoy *and* Maverick Magazine.

Gap Creek
by Robert Morgan
Algonquin Books
Chapel Hill, N.C. - 2000
$13.00 (paper) $22.95 (hardcover)

Though he teaches at Cornell University in New York, novelist and poet Robert Morgan has adopted none of contemporary fiction's mannered, middle-class academic angst. An old-fashioned writer, he sets his stories along the mountainous North Carolina/South Carolina border where he grew up. He imagines Appalachians of a bygone day as steadfast, hard-working, honest, religious, and loving, with frailties and cruelties forgivable and forgiven.

Morgan's vision of Appalachian people is a romantic one, the flip side of familiar imaginings of the violence and evil, moonshine and madness in the mountains. Though his portrayal may be the kinder of the two, neither image does justice to mountain lives past or present. It can lead to the belief that it is desirable to emulate the past, but it's a past that never was.

In *Gap Creek,* vagueness about time contributes to an idealistic, once-upon-a-time quality. The story occurs sometime after the advent of trains and before cars. Morgan gives no news of the outside world, mentions no schools or newspapers, and notes few imported goods besides coffee, tea, sugar, and, of all things, coconut. That sense of self-sufficiency and isolation is a well-loved myth about a part of the country that has always been connected, in reality, to the economics and politics of the state, nation, and the world.

What saves Morgan's novel, his third, from a mawkish, Waltons/Andy Griffith sentimentality is his gripping storytelling, an indelible sense of place, and the flesh-and-blood-and-guts subject matter. With a finely honed, no-extra-words narrative, Morgan turns the story of prosaic lives into a page-turner.

The very first lines uttered by Morgan's young narrator portend high drama: "I know about Masenier because I was there. I seen him die." High drama does indeed follow, though most of this story concerns a farm girl's narrow life: the planting and gathering of crops, clearing woods and making jelly — nothing extraordinary, except in the telling. Masenier is the little brother of the teenaged narrator, Julie, who tells her story in a simple but elegant dialect. She holds the little boy as he dies gruesomely of an intestinal parasite on the mountainside on a freezing winter night.

Julie is an exquisite storyteller, but she gives no sense of her own changes, remaining unsatisfyingly static. The death of her brother and, shortly afterwards, her father would in most stories mark the passage to adulthood, but Julie seems to have been born responsible and grown-up, resigned to her fate. As the strongest of four girls in the family, she's a workhorse. "The job just fell to me, without anybody explaining why," she says of cutting firewood. "And since it had to be done, I done it, and kept on doing it."

That goes for all the outside work on the farm. She details her labors in an engaging dry-as-dust tone. She continues in the same unflappable style when describing the exciting moment that a handsome young stranger, Hank, sees her sweating at one end of a crosscut saw. Far from being put off by the activity Julie herself considers unfeminine, he angles for an invitation to call on her.

That suits Julie's modest ambition. "I knowed that more than anything in the world I wanted to be married to Hank Richards. I wanted to live in a house with just him and me, and I wanted to help him work in the fields and raise chickens and pick apples to dry in the sun for winter."

The dream is not destined to come true. Hank and Julie do marry and then walk over the hills carrying all they own to a farm on Gap Creek. There Julie keeps house for the cranky widower who owns the place, and Hank works making bricks for a new mill nearby.

It is an onerous life, but Julie simply gets on with it. When she causes a kitchen fire that results in the landlord's death, she experiences none of the anguish or guilt or nightmares that might beset a 17-year-old survivor of such an ordeal. She remains as strong and practical as ever.

The strain begins to tell on Hank, though. He at least has recognizable emotions. When Julie falls for a scam, Hank hits his pregnant wife and calls her a "dumb heifer" in a predictable domestic violence sequence that has become a staple in books, movies, and television. It's the only scene in the book that stood out to me as an overworked cliché. Unfortunately, as we know so well from all the facts that have come out about domestic violence, it's unrealistic to suppose that there would be just one incident of violence in this marriage: Abusers keep abusing. Yet Morgan implies that Hank has learned his lesson and will not strike his wife again. The author's own evidence does not support him. Hank has a nasty temper. He gets fired from his job, and employers blacklist him because of his outbursts. He is not quite the paragon Julie is.

The novelist obviously admires women. He favors hopeful brides as narrators in this novel as he has previously in *The Truest Pleasure* and in part of *The Hinterlands.* These women often describe birth as well as everyday chores in vivid detail. They are dignified, without resentment, restlessness, or curiosity about the wider world. Like Morgan's other heroines, Julie's spirituality, sense of duty, physical strength and beauty, patience, and — remarkably — her sexuality are all present and in proportion. This is the perfect woman.

When Julie and Hank leave Gap Creek wiser and more prepared, Hank — with his newfound religion and patience — joins Julie as a character too good to be true. A mountain mist softens the sharp image seen through Morgan's lens. Placing his characters on a pedestal, Morgan robs them of their complexities. Yet, in the hands of such a gifted storyteller, it is worthwhile to give way to the romance and, as simply as Robert Morgan does, to love and honor Julie and Hank and their brave, foolish start in their small world.

— Pat Arnow

Pat Arnow is former editor of Now & Then *and* Southern Exposure, *former managing editor of the* Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association, *and was the culture editor of* In These Times. *She is now a research editor for* Reader's Digest *in New York City.*

Reviews

Death and the River
by Ron Houchin
Salmon Press
Dublin -1997
$14.95 (paper)

I'm a little embarrassed to use this phrase, but the quip, "You're not in Kansas any more," is just too apt a description of *Death and the River* for me to pass it up. Houchin himself refers to this famous line from *The Wizard of Oz* in one of the best poems in his book.

On opening this collection, the reader enters a world where nothing is ordinary. Houchin breathes a poetic significance into the most unlikely objects, turning all of his world into a mythology that is almost pagan, transforming even traditionally Christian images into myth that is older and grander. Speaking as the plowman in the Breughel painting of Icarus' fall into the sea, Houchin summarizes his view of the world: "a curtain pulled aside for a second,/ and I knew I wasn't just in Kansas, or never/ had been, as if a wild face were behind everything."

Houchin's poetic vision is broad enough in scope so that it can both view everything as participating in godliness and also recognize the insignificance of things that last only a fraction of an instant in the infinity of time. In "Apple Time," fat country women peeling apples are beneficent and beautiful goddesses. The narrator in many of the poems imagines himself capable of magical acts: floating, flying, and walking through walls.

But in this poetry, not just people are godlike. Houchin's vision holds every creature and object in common. In "Gathering," bats cluster in a crevice of rock, old men tell stories on porches, laborers confer at the back of a moving van "as if… this congregating of ours/ could be seen through the dust of the galaxies,/ as if this is all that living things can do."

Houchin imbues objects with such presence that he avoids the solipsism such poetry risks, and, through strikingly original metaphor, personifies the most unlikely objects. Bullets, for example, become Buddhist monks practicing meditation:

In the revolver's cylinder,
they are having a session.
You can see their six bald heads
peeking from the end.
It's a temple in there.
They chant metallic silence.

A wonderful congeries of spirits make up his disarmingly comradely dance of death. But informing this congress is a deep sense of human isolation. Solitude is implicit in the poetry, and it leads to a kind of Buddhist awareness of the pathos of human identity. In "Anatomy of a Robot," Houchin's metaphor reflects this awareness: "So I will tell them identity is/ just a printout, a short story, a leaking/ at the joints of time."

Despite all its interest in death, Houchin's poetry isn't morbid because everything, including death, is eroticized—not in a narrowly sexual way but in the broader sense Freud used the term *Eros:* the creative, vital element in human beings. Everything in Houchin's poetry is alive and fresh. Even clichés of Christian religion are revivified and brought into communion with the world in "Christ in the Pumpkin at Autumn" and in "New Night for Lazarus." One of the happiest images in the book is in the latter poem, which evokes a euphoric feeling that occurs mostly in dreams:

Everything old was blown off
like rotting clothes. When
I sweated up the mountain,
heaven sang out in the cold moisture
on my skin. I waited in the high,
sweet night for the sun to come over the hill,
    like Jesus
running with a basket of wine.

Houchin's work possesses so many poetic attributes that I'm reminded of what author Jim Wayne Miller said about him at the Appalachian Writers' Workshop in Hindman, Ky. After reading one of Houchin's poems aloud, Miller looked up from the page and proclaimed: "Now *there*, folks, is a poet."

—Edwina Pendarvis

Edwina Pendarvis lives in Huntington, W.Va., and teaches at Marshall University. Her poems and prose have been published in Antietam Review, Appalachian Journal, Journal of Kentucky Studies, Louisville Review, Wind Magazine, *and other journals.*

It All Happened in Renfro Valley
by Pete Stamper
The University Press of Kentucky
Lexington, Ky. - 1999
$14.95 (paper) $29.95 (hardcover)

John Lair's Renfro Valley Barn Dance, a stage performance of country music, has had a devoted following through the years. That following was generated in its early history by broadcasts over WLW in Cincinnati, WHAS in Louisville, Ky., and the Mutual, NBC, and CBS national networks. Radio fans made their way to Renfro Valley in South Central Kentucky to visit and see the entertainers they loved. They and new converts have continued to come to the "valley where time stood still."

Lair, whose family is native to Renfro Valley, actually started the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance* as a broadcast, mostly with Kentucky talent, from the Cincinnati Music Hall in 1937. He moved the show to the 1,000-seat Big Barn theater in Renfro Valley in 1939. Lair had earlier worked at the *Corbin (Ky.) Tribune* and served as program director at Chicago's WLS. He had also managed the *Boone County Jamboree* country music program and additional shows at WLW and other sta-

The University Press of Kentucky

Pete Stamper, author of *It All Happened in Renfro Valley.*

tions in Cincinnati. In addition to his writing skills, he was a warm, down-home-voiced announcer.

Pete Stamper, who tells the story of the Barn Dance in *It All Happened in Renfro Valley,* joined the show in the 1940s. Except for time in the Army and stints with the ABC-TV country music show *Ozark Jubilee* and country singer Dolly Parton's shows, he has worked there off and on ever since as a comedian, a master of ceremonies, and a writer. Stamper also ran Lair's radio station, WRVK; edited the *Renfro Valley Bugle,* the monthly newspaper Lair started in 1945; and helped with another radio show, the *Sunday Morning Gatherin'.* In recent years, he has served as the complex's entertainment director.

Thus, he has known most of the artists who were part of the show, and he got to know John Lair, as interesting a self-taught entrepreneur as ever came down the pike. Stamper is honest in revealing Lair as a shrewd visionary, but one who sometimes had a secretive way of doing business.

This is a remarkably good book. Other writers, such as historian Bill C. Malone in *Country Music U.S.A.* and country music scholar Wayne Daniel in *Pickin' on Peachtree: A History of Country Music in Atlanta, Georgia,* have set out to do books on Renfro Valley. Commitments and the problems of doing research from afar, however, have meant that they were unable to follow through. Pete Stamper, encouraged by then Barn Dance owner Warren Rosenthal, dictated this book in his folksy and colorful way, giving numerous anecdotes. He introduces the reader to an impressive line-up of entertainers through the years, including Whitey Ford, known as the "Duke of Paducah," Homer and Jethro, The Coon Creek Girls, Old Joe Clark, and many others, mostly Kentuckians.

Stamper tells an interesting story about the entertainment and financial struggles under Lair and of later owners, such as investors J. Hal Smith, Ray Price, Willie Nelson, and Hank Cochran. These investors optioned the enterprise for a time before Lair recovered it in 1976 with the help of partners Glen Pennington, Alfie Smith, and others. After Lair's death, his daughter Ann Lair Henderson ran the show for a while. Finally, the Lair family sold out in 1990 to partners headed by Ralph Gabbard, who began the building of the new Renfro Valley complex. Warren Rosenthal, a Lexington, Ky., businessman, then bought out the enterprise in 1989 and finished the new state-of-the-art $1.8 million auditorium and the rest of the complex, which now includes shops, restaurants, lodging, and festival grounds.

The book is amply illustrated with photographs of the many entertainers over the years and of the new and old buildings in the valley. It also has a useful index and a complete listing of all performers who were ever part of the cast.

A postscript to the story told in Stamper's book is that in 2000, Rosenthal donated Renfro Valley Entertainment, including the Renfro Valley Barn Dance, debt-free to the nonprofit Kentucky Music Country Museum and Hall of Fame. Fundraising for the project is in progress, with support from the state of Kentucky for this economic development initiative. Work has already started on the Museum and Hall of Fame, which will be on land donated by the Lair family. The Museum and Hall of Fame is scheduled to open in March 2002. With luck and good management, this turn-of-events assures the future of the Renfro Valley Barn Dance.

— Loyal Jones

Loyal Jones is the author of Minstrel of the Appalachians: The Story of Bascom Lamar Lunsford *and* Radio's "Kentucky Mountain Boy" Bradley Kincaid. *He is currently working on an encyclopedia of country comedians.*

The Kentucky River
by William E. Ellis
University Press of Kentucky
Lexington, Ky. - 2000
$29.95 (hardcover)

Every river needs a recorder, a person who captures its life in words, a biographer of its watery history. The Kentucky has such a biographer in William E. Ellis.

In his latest book, *The Kentucky River,* Ellis' scope is large as he describes the river that flows from the state's eastern mountains, travels 255 miles past Frankfort, Ky., and empties into the Ohio. The early chapters give a floating tour down the waterway, chronicle the river's human history, and explain its geological formation. The five middle chapters — the heart of the book — explore more thoroughly the various human ties to the river, from logging and dams to floods, work, and life on the river. Ellis ends the book with a look at the river today and with questions for the future.

The author knows and loves his subject. The pages of notes and bibliographies attest to Ellis' thorough research, as do the several fine old photographs. His use of oral histories is exceptional. For example, in the chapter, "My Mind on the River," he describes a fire that burned a distillery in the 1950s. Downstream, one resident said, the fish "came to the top of the water grinning. … [People] put them in landlocked pools of clear water to sober them up." Ellis gleans interviews on river life and shares the best.

Ellis also shares technical information in an interesting, clear manner. The chapters "Riding the Tide: Logging and Rafting on the Kentucky" and "Harnessing the River: Ferries, Bridges, and Dams" illustrate this. In the logging chapter, Ellis describes the methods used from the 1870s to the 1930s to harvest timber and float it to mills downriver. Throughout, he incorporates oral histories to explain the technical and re-create the experience of this work, especially of "riding the tide" every spring on rafts constructed in lengths of up to 70 feet. For some, it was a joyride to manhood. For others, it was an early death. As one informant said, "A fellow got drowned up ahead of us, a Deaton boy. That was in 1924. That was in May. That was the last time I went down."

The Kentucky River, however, is not without problems. The first two chapters lack the vitality of language found in the rest of the book, mainly because Ellis attempts to cover too much territory in these summaries, especially in the geology section. Ellis tries to describe the great tumult of millions of years in eight pages. We need the geological information in this book, but we also need a lengthier, more concrete handling of it, similar to Scott Weidensaul's *Mountains of the Heart.*

Reviews

The other main dam in the course of this book is the absence of good final editing. The text lacks smooth transitions as it jumps in awkward places, moving from the Shakers to dams, from drowning to drought. Headings would easily improve these places. Ellis also interrupts the flow with a barge full of clichés and occasional empty preaching. His language and images are so strong in the rest of the book that these glitches stand out. A good revision, like a spring flood, would clean out this debris.

This book, though, is of great value. It chronicles a fascinating history of this particular place, examining the many ways we have tried to shape it, with locks and dams, for example, and the many ways it has shaped us. "You never get the river out of your system," said one man. "It's always there." The Kentucky River's stories, though particular, share much with the stories of other rivers and places throughout Appalachia.

Even if you're like me and have no direct tie to the Kentucky River, you'll gain much from Ellis' accounts of this place and its history. I wish the rivers near where I live had such a book as *The Kentucky River.*

—Jim Minick

Jim Minick teaches at Radford University in Radford, Va., and directs the Appalachian Teachers' Network. He floats whenever he can on the Little and New rivers near his home.

Among the Believers
by Ron Rash
Iris Press
Oak Ridge, Tenn. - 2000
$12.00 (paper)

The cover of Ron Rash's new book of poems is as pretty as a postcard. The color photograph of a small white church, tucked into a clearing in the mountains, fills the front and back covers. It's like holding a piece of Appalachia in your hands. The words *Among the Believers*, written in church-white script, stretch across the treetops' early autumn green and gold.

It's a cover that locates the reader right away, both geographically and spiritually. Hidden away from the world and viewed from a distance, the church appears brave, beautiful, and poignant, for we know that several seasons are passing: the opulence of summer, the richness of a culture, the heyday of belief. The title suggests that the poet has lived "among the believers," perhaps even numbers himself among them, and has brought us this testament.

But open the book, and the poems subvert and undermine the neat beauty of the cover. The first poem describes a "hard country" where "men argued map lines with blood,/ raised death like a seed crop," and where a raping, pillaging band of murderers, "their backs/ laden with golden crosses," were drowned by the weight of their loot while crossing "a river called Eden." The violent unnamed men of this poem are both historical and mythic, and they are strange mixtures of Adam and Christ stumbling, cross-burdened, to dooms of their own making.

Many of the poems that follow in the book's first two sections are rife with violence — both human deadliness and the harsh judgments of lightning, flood, hunger, sickness. But scattered among them are also poems of exultation, of "God-

Books Worth Mentioning

Mason Jars in the Flood and Other Stories by Gary Carden (Boone, N.C.: Parkway Publishers, 2000; $20.00 hardcover). Gary Carden's fourth book is a collection of stories about his North Carolina childhood and the grandparents who raised him. A popular storyteller, playwright, and folklorist, Carden has also included in this collection two long Appalachian folktales and a short series of narrative poems.

River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley by Joe William Trotter Jr. (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1998; $17.00 paper). Representing the passage from slavery to freedom for African Americans, the Ohio River became known as the "River Jordan," symbolizing the path to the Promised Land. In this book, illustrated with black-and-white photos, Trotter traces the development of four African American urban centers (Louisville, Ky., Evansville, Ind., Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati) from the arrival of the first blacks in the Ohio Valley through the civil rights movement. He also illuminates the impact of the Ohio River in the context of the larger American story.

The Pond Mountain Chronicle: Self-Portrait of a Southern Appalachian Community by Leland R. Cooper and Mary Lee Cooper (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 1998; $25.00 paper). The small valley beneath Pond Mountain in Ashe County, N.C., still holds some of the descendants of the original settlers. The authors, newcomers to the valley, conducted 32 interviews with valley residents and offer those stories as an oral history of one particular Southern Appalachian valley community.

River Song: A Journey Down the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers by Joe and Monica Cook (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000; $39.95 hardcover). With stunning photography, this coffee-table book records the photographers' 100-day, 540-mile journey from the headwaters of the Chattahoochee in North Georgia to the river's end at the Gulf of Mexico. The text is a travelogue and an environmental record of the current state of the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers.

A Year in the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area by Chuck Summers (With a foreword by Howard Baker Jr.; Jellico, Tenn.: Contemplative Images, 1999; $9.95 paper). Photographer, minister, and conservationist Chuck Summers records the four seasons at the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area with breathtaking color photography. The Big South Fork park straddles Northeast Tennessee and Southeast Kentucky and covers over 106,000 acres of federally protected land. Summers' sparse and informative text accompanies the photographs.

—Marianne Worthington

Marianne Worthington is Now & Then's *reviews editor.*

light," of revelation. The leap from one poem to the next is often large. Poems about Civil War incidents are intermingled with family narratives, first person lyrics, and poems in the third person about people who are never identified. The effect is of moving through a landscape haunted with history, saturated with stories.

The third section opens with a poem that serves as a gloss on all the poems before it:

Signs
My older kin always believed
in looking backward to explain
the here and now, always a sign
present in the past each time

a barn burned down, a life was lost.
So like boys turning over stones
to find what dark had hid from day,
they'd turn over in their minds

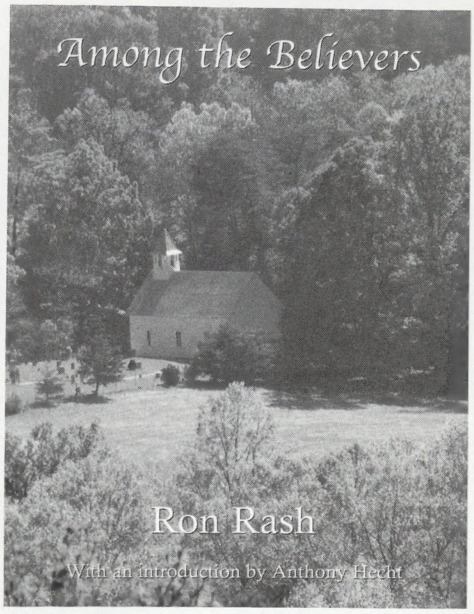
the way a mare turned from its stall
as if she smelled hay smoldering,
a living hand so damp and cold
it seemed already in the grave.

And so I learned to see the world
as language one might understand
but only when translated by
signs first forgotten or misread.

One of the remarkable achievements of *Among the Believers* is how compellingly Rash practices what he preaches, how he "translates" for us by "signs first forgotten or misread" the literal and spiritual landscape where he abides. Our relation to the scene on the book's cover changes once we enter these poems. In turn, the poems implicitly challenge us to "translate" our own landscapes by what has been forgotten or misread.

In the book's final sections, Rash gives us the "here and now" poems of his own memory and experience. They are full of accumulated power and allusiveness. As meditations on belief, they are subtle and beautiful, skeptical and fervent. The poet's imagination, which has been the instrument for hearing stories latent in the landscape, is also the instrument for probing faith. The belief evident in these poems is a belief in the music of the voice and the power of the imagination, not a belief in the dogma of a man like Preacher Lusk who "gripped/ his Bible like a bat snagged/ from the pentecostal gloom."

It is the poet's own voice that bounces back to him when he hollers down a well



Courtesy of The Iris Press

where allegedly one could "hear howling up from hell/ the scorched voice of Carl Gragstone." And, in the other direction, only "the a cappelia hymn/ sung by my great-aunt" could lead "us across Jordan,/ and the gravestones leaned as if/ even the dead were listening."

Indeed, like his great-aunt's hymn, it is the consummate music of these poems that gives them their own intensity and power. Rash is a fierce craftsman, who asks everything a poet should ask of a line of poetry. His fresh, vivid language and his taut syllabics sing us, not across Jordan, but through the streams and rivers, dark valleys and mountain "fawnlight" of the literal and spiritual place that always surpasses our understanding.

—Lynn Powell

An East Tennessee native, Lynn Powell is the author of Old & New Testaments. *Her recent poems have appeared in* Image, Seneca Review, *and* Now & Then. *Powell now lives in Oberlin, Ohio.*

Between the Flowers
by Harriette Simpson Arnow
edited by Joseph Svoboda

Michigan State University Press
East Lansing, Mich. - 1999
$34.95 (hardcover)

Until last year, only the handful of scholars who ventured to view Harriette Simpson Arnow's manuscripts at the University of Kentucky archives knew that one of our region's most respected authors had written *Between the Flowers,* another installment in her cycle of Appalachian novels.

Almost anyone with an interest in Appalachian literature is familiar with Arnow's trilogy of Kentucky novels: *Mountain Path* (1936), *Hunter's Horn* (1949), and her most widely known work, *The Dollmaker* (1954). *Between the Flowers* was written after the publication of *Mountain Path,* but due to the bankruptcy of her first publisher and a variety of other obstacles, the manuscript was never published. As time passed and Arnow's attention went to other projects, it remained among the author's personal papers, all but forgotten to the publishing world. Now, nearly 15 years after her death, Michigan State University Press has unearthed the lost novel and made it available to the public for the first time.

The novel is a valuable additional chapter in the saga of Little Smoky Creek in Kentucky. Here the characters of Arnow's novels struggle to choose between a devotion to the tradition of cultivating the land — a devotion that often leaves them impoverished — and the often deceptive allure of prosperity promised by industrial jobs in distant cities. In *Between the Flowers,* set in the 1930s, a young couple's marriage is strained to the point of breaking because of this dilemma.

From her childhood, Delph Costello collected newspaper clippings about locals who went away to college or jobs in New York City and other cosmopolitan places. Delph, who had never been away from Costello's Valley, dreamed of following them. She falls in love with Marsh Gregory, who had recently arrived back in Kentucky from working at the oil wells out West. While still only a naive teenage girl, Delph elopes with Marsh, expecting that they will go to South America where Marsh has found a job. Instead, Marsh unexpectedly gains the chance to fulfill his secret ambition of buying a farm across the river from the land where Delph grew up. The two find that their visions of happiness are diametrically opposed.

Arnow renders the frustration, anxieties, regrets, and attempts at reconciliation of both spouses honestly and convincingly,

perhaps making *Between the Flowers* Arnow's most emotionally intimate look at marriage. The novelist portrays both Delph and Marsh as complex, well-intentioned people who are torn apart by their love for one another on the one hand and their conflicting personal desires on the other, divisions exacerbated by their inability to communicate their needs. Delph carries a "hurt that never died" because Marsh "never told her of his dreams and plans" and because she feels trapped in a life of farming she had long dreamed of escaping. Marsh's expectation that "a bit of land" would ensure "peace and security and Delph's love" is dashed and leads to disappointment and even violence.

Arnow's treatment of her two protagonists is remarkably balanced and compassionate, even when Marsh once strikes Delph in a fit of anger. The moving and believable account of Delph and Marsh's marriage adds them to Arnow's gallery of powerful characters, such as Gertie Nevels of *The Dollmaker* and Nunn Ballew of *Hunter's Horn.*

Between the Flowers is also notable among Arnow's novels for its introduction of an African American family. Marsh and Delph's neighbors, the Creekmores, play a central role in the life of the young couple's son, rescuing him from death more than once. Marsh even names the child for the African American father, Sober Creekmore.

Although a compelling novel containing some of Arnow's finest characters, *Between the Flowers* does not achieve the mastery of *Hunter's Horn* or *The Dollmaker.* The novel is, at moments, melodramatic. Arnow sometimes resorts to sensational devices, such as a ravaging flood or a rampaging bull, to provide action in an otherwise complex psychological novel. However, these weaknesses are a small price to pay for the addition of this moving portrait of an Appalachian marriage to the Arnow canon.

—Joy Hayes

Joy Hayes is the current recipient of the James Still Fellowship at the University of Kentucky where she is pursuing a master's degree in literature.

"Do Not Hasten to Bid Me Adieu"
Classics About Appalachian Rivers and Valleys

Come a Tide by George Ella Lyon with illustrations by Stephen Gammell (New York: Orchard Books, 1990; $6.95 paper). George Ella Lyon's classic children's picture book is the story of a flood in a mountain community. On the fourth day of a hard rain after a heavy snow, the grandmother in Lyon's story proclaims, "It'll come a tide." She is absolutely right. Lyon reports, "Sure enough, when all the creeks rushed down to the river like kinfolks coming home, it did."

The French Broad by Wilma Dykeman (Newport, Tenn.: Wakestone Books, 1992; reprint of 1955 edition; $12.95 paper). Wilma Dykeman's first book, *The French Broad,* was published in 1955 in Holt, Rinehart and Winston's famous "Rivers of America." This now classic document offered a socioeconomic, historical, and environmental chronicle of the French Broad River. The French Broad rises in the Blue Ridge of Transylvania County in Western North Carolina, eventually flowing into Tennessee, where it turns west to join the Holston River above Knoxville to become the Tennessee River. Still in print today, *The French Broad* is a compelling narrative, biography, legend, and myth of one mountain river and its people. Dykeman's account is distinguished by her engaging storytelling about ordinary, often humble Appalachian people and by her commitment to tell what were then uncomfortable truths about the pollution of the river.

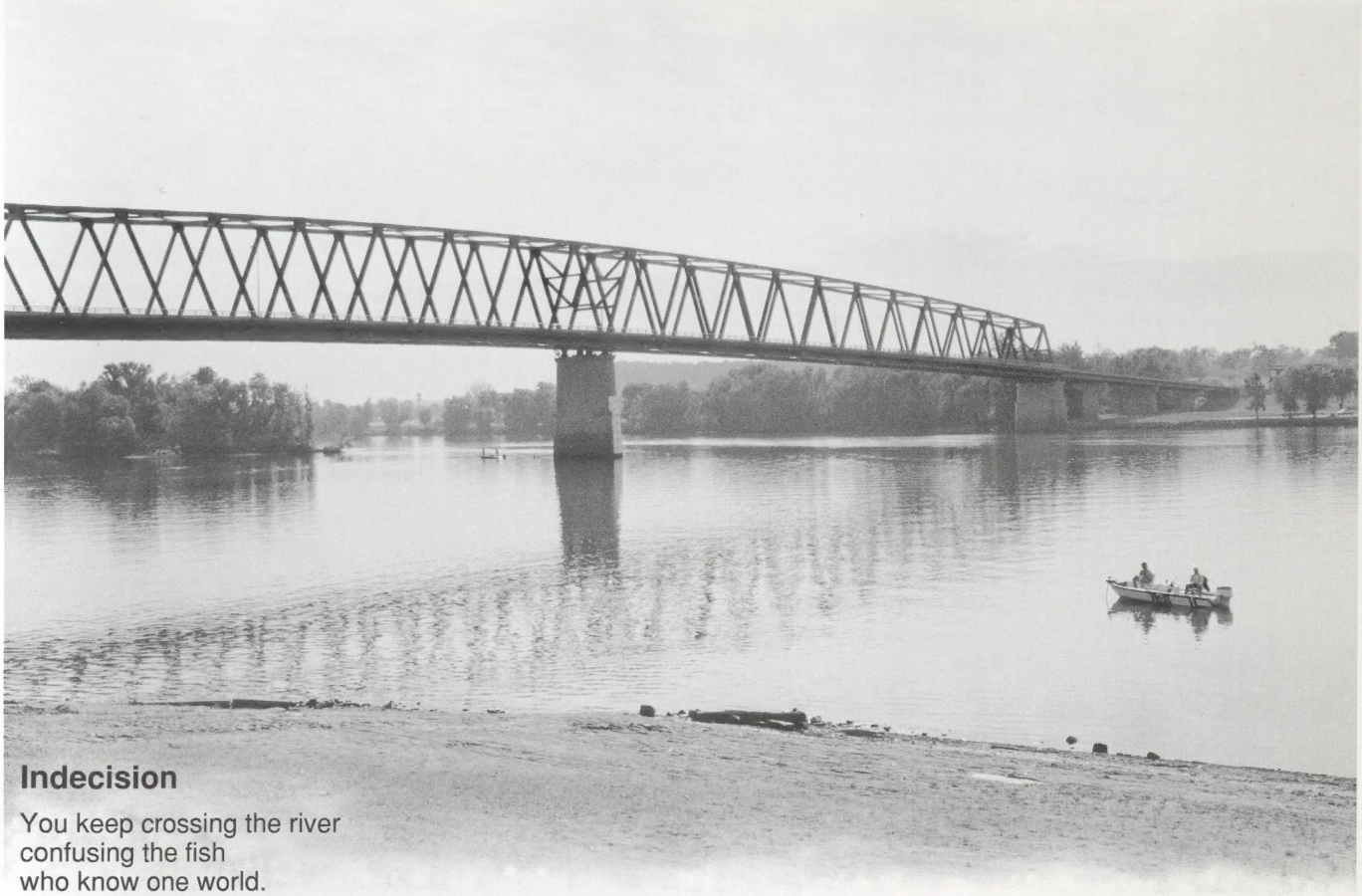
From This Valley, written and presented by Gurney Norman, produced and directed by John Morgan (Lexington, Ky.: Kentucky Educational Television, 1989; $24.95 VHS cassette). In this one-hour literary tour, Kentucky author Gurney Norman explores the history and culture of the people who have lived and worked along Kentucky's Big Sandy River. He conducts poignant interviews with writers Verna Mae Slone of Pippa Passes, Ky., Billy C. Clark of Catlettsburg, Ky., and Denise Giardina of Bluefield, W.Va.

The Iron Mountain Review: Holston River Issue (Vol. 1, No. 2) edited by John Lang (Emory, Va.: Emory & Henry College, 1984). This early issue of *The Iron Mountain Review* features pioneer explorer Col. John Donelson's 1779 diary entries recording his journey down the length of the Holston River, as well as a contemporary geographical narrative and landscape map of the Holston. The majority of the issue, however, is devoted to East Tennessean Jeff Daniel Marion's imaginative response to the Holston. Marion's "By the Banks of the Holston" is a joyful combination of personal narrative, local history, fiction, and poetry marked by Marion's unmistakable voice as he explores the meaning of a river in his home place.

Old Burnside by Harriette Simpson Arnow (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1977; $12.50 paper). In 1953, Harriette Arnow traveled with her family from Ann Arbor, Mich., to her childhood home in Burnside, Ky. In Arnow's youth, Burnside sat on the floodplain formed by the Cumberland River and the Big South Fork. With the building of Wolf Creek Dam in 1950, the 101-mile long Lake Cumberland was created and part of Burnside was flooded. Disoriented and confused upon seeing her childhood town rearranged by the creation of the lake, Arnow recounts, "I was soon able to walk by the shore of the lake. It lay there, still and blue until I peered into it to see below the blue a murky nothingness." In this memoir, Arnow combines personal memory and autobiographic detail with a general history of the town.

—Marianne Worthington

Marianne Worthington is Now & Then's *reviews editor.*



Alice Anthony

Indecision

You keep crossing the river
confusing the fish
who know one world.

Trees on both sides see your face,
flutter in the wind
of your waver.

While the willow bends to touch
the water you cross,
silver maple

lifts up its leaves in laughter;
the white pine whispers,
This way, and waits.

You move toward the sycamore
thinking you will lie
down in the shade

of its broad leaves, only to
find the ground littered
with prickly fruit.

—Sue Anne Siegrist

A native of West Virginia, Sue Anne Siegrist earned chemistry and biology degrees at Marshall University in Huntington. Seven years ago, she moved with her husband to Connecticut where she writes poetry and participates in writing and reading workshops. Siegrist's poetry has appeared in ByLine Magazine, Raw Dog Press, *and* Connecticut River Review.

East Tennessee State University is one of 46 institutions in the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system, the seventh largest system of higher education in the nation. The Tennessee Board of Regents is the governing board for this system, which is comprised of six universities, 14 community colleges, and 26 area technology centers. The TBR system enrolls 80 percent of all Tennessee students attending public institutions of higher education.
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Developed in response to the sudden collapse of the steel industry in the 1970s and the 1980s, the Rivers of Steel National and State Heritage Area is an emerging network of industrial and cultural sites radiating out from Pittsburgh. But it is more than just places to visit. It is a public-private partnership involving individuals, businesses, and agencies from more than 500 communities in seven Southwestern Pennsylvania counties who have found a way to work together for the benefit of all. See "Rivers of Steel" by Christine M. Goldbeck on page 30.

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